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THE ROLE OF THE NORD-SUD PERIOD IN THE
POETIC EVOLUTION OF VICENTE HUIDOBRO

by



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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The role of the Nord-Sud period in the poetic evolution of Vicente Huidobro submitted by Estelle Denise Marie Sheppy in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

At the beginning of this century, a new trend emerged in literature--the search for the new, the bold and the strange--resulting in emphasis being placed on innovation and originality rather than on poetic merit. Vicente Huidobro's work fell victim to this ephemeral standard with the result that, apart from this concern with originality, few serious studies of it exist.

It is the contention of this thesis that Huidobro's poetic works which were published between 1911 and 1931 display a frank and serious search for a poetic ideal--namely creationism--and that the period Huidobro spent in France collaborating on the literary review Nord-Sud was instrumental in the realization of his conception of poetry. It is a further contention of this thesis that Huidobro, as is the case with all literary figures of any importance, conceived of creationism, not by formulating a new and revolutionary poetic theory, but by emphasizing and restructuring certain concepts which are an essential part of poetry itself.

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INTRODUCTION

The second decade of the twentieth century in France witnessed the growth and expansion of a movement of literary and artistic liberation and adventure of which Guillaume Apollinaire became the chief spokesman. Apollinaire was aware, through his innumerable friends and acquaintances, of every new tendency in art and literature, and experimented with many of them in his poetry. Therefore, he represented for the young generation of poets "l'esprit nouveau". Because in their eyes he embodied all that to which they aspired, the founders of and the young contributors to the literary review Nord-Sud¹ chose to group themselves around Apollinaire. They declared their admiration in the first issue of the review: "Plus que quiconque aujourd'hui, il a tracé des routes neuves, ouvert de nouveaux horizons. Il a droit à toute notre ferveur, à toute notre admiration".² To this group of young admirers, Vicente Huidobro,³ a young Chilean poet, attached himself upon his arrival in Paris in late 1916.

Prior to his departure for France, Huidobro had been concerned mainly with renovating the poetry of his native Chile and freeing it from the bonds of Modernism. Although he had succeeded in expounding his theory of creationism in such prose works as Non serviam (1913), Pasando y pasando (1914), and the preface to Adán (1916), his poetry failed to free itself from tradition. His works of poetry, Ecos del alma (1911), Canciones en la noche (1913), La gruta del si-

lencio (1913), Las pagodas ocultas (1914), and the poem Adán (1916), reveal Huidobro as a poet in search of a new form but unable to achieve it.

It is not known how Huidobro happened to be introduced to Apollinaire and the Nord-Sud group. In his essay "El creacionismo", Huidobro claimed that "a fines de 1916 caía en París, en el ambiente de la revista Sic".⁴ In his essay "Yo encuentro...", Huidobro gave an account of an evening spent in the company of Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso (OC, I, 683) and another when he and Max Jacob jointly composed a poem (OC, I, 684), and, in his essay "Manifiesto de manifiestos", he mentioned a conversation he had with Apollinaire (OC, I, 668).

The only substantial evidence that there was in fact interaction between Huidobro and the Nord-Sud group is found in the review itself. Huidobro began contributing both funds and poems in April 1917 and continued to do so until December of the same year, at which time it is believed that Pierre Reverdy,⁵ the director of the review, and Huidobro had a quarrel. Guillermo de Torre, who knew Huidobro in Madrid, reports that Reverdy and Huidobro were good friends in 1917.⁶ Then, "al salir Huidobro de París, Reverdy varió totalmente de posición respecto a él. ... le aludía desdeñosamente como un élève de son école, y trataba de anularle en absoluto".⁷ Huidobro did not contribute to any further issues of Nord-Sud or any other French review before his departure for Madrid in 1918.

Following the supposed quarrel between Huidobro and Reverdy, a controversy developed over the question of influences. Each poet claimed to have introduced a new style in the review which later be-

came known as the Nord-Sud style. E. Gómez-Carillo, in an article published in El Liberal in 1920, quoted Reverdy as having made the following statement:

Sí; ya estoy enterado de que existe en lengua española un movimiento de vanguardia interesante, del que se dice importador -- ignoro con qué motivo -- un tal señor Huidobro, que se titula allí iniciador del movimiento cubista de acá. Este poeta chileno, muy influenciable, tuvo la debilidad de sugestionarse ante mis obras. Y, hábilmente, publicó en Madrid un libro antedatado, con el perverso fin de hacer creer que éramos nosotros quienes lo imitábamos a él, y no él quien imitaba a los demás.⁸

Although it is generally accepted that this article was written for sensationalism and did not represent Reverdy's views on the matter, Huidobro took the accusation seriously and immediately sought a way to vindicate himself. The book referred to in the above passage is El espejo de agua, which Huidobro published in 1918 in Madrid with this note: "La primera edición de esta obra se publicó en 1916".⁹ Since this book contains many of the poems which Huidobro published in French in Nord-Sud, the date of publication has seemed important to the critics attempting to determine whether Reverdy influenced Huidobro or was influenced by him.

In his effort to prove that El espejo de agua was published in 1916, Huidobro tried to obtain a copy from some of his friends in South America. After four years of pleading letters to Ángel Cruchaga Santa María, the latter finally made this statement on July 16, 1924, in La Nación: "La primera producción creacionista de Huidobro, fué la plaquette El espejo de agua, impresa en julio de 1916 en Buenos Aires. Al año siguiente tradujo en París las composiciones

que aparecían en la citada obra y las incluyó en Horizon carré".¹⁰

Meanwhile in Madrid the quarrel was entering a new phase: both Guillermo de Torre¹¹ and Huidobro¹² claimed to have been the originators of ultraism, an avant-garde movement in Spain which published its manifesto in 1920. Gloria Videla is of the opinion that, from the chaos of this movement, there was only one coherent idea upon which general agreement was reached: "Fue, simplemente, un movimiento de superación de la lírica vigente, una reacción contra el modernismo, una voluntad de renovación, un ir 'más allá', como lo indica su nombre".¹³

The controversy outlined above is continuing today¹⁴ and has proven to be to Huidobro's detriment because his poetic works have been overshadowed by his obsession with innovation and originality. In Vientos contrarios (1926), he described his consuming obsession:

En mis primeros años toda mi vida artística se resume en una escala de ambiciones. A los diecisiete años, me dije: "Debo ser el primer poeta de América"; luego, al pasar de los años, pensé: "Debo ser el primer poeta de mi lengua". Después, a medida que corría el tiempo, mis ambiciones fueron subiendo y me dije: "Es preciso ser el primer poeta de mi siglo"; y más tarde, estudiando la poesía con un amor cada vez más profundo, llegué a convencerme de que la poesía no ha existido jamás y que era necesario constituirnos unos cuantos en verdadera secta para hacerla existir. (OC, I, 705-706)

This statement has been used repeatedly by critics to dismiss Huidobro as an exaggerator. However, his personality must be set aside and his works read and studied in order to understand his long, arduous and, I suggest, sincere quest for the essence of poetry itself.

David Bary and Cedomil Goic were the first critics to study objectively Huidobro's works instead of relying on historical facts

distorted by time and use. The large number of studies on Huidobro are concerned mainly with the question of originality and the publication date of El espejo de agua. Instead of resolving the problem, they have been making it more complex by the addition of contradictory facts and accounts given by friends of Huidobro while ignoring almost completely Huidobro as a poet. David Bary's book, Huidobro o la vocación poética, is a study based on the poetic works themselves and the first which studies Huidobro's poetry published in Nord-Sud. Although he has uncovered some "evidence" of influences on Huidobro by Reverdy, Bary has also found some similarities which he calls "coincidental". He concludes that Huidobro cannot honestly claim to have brought his style and aesthetic to Nord-Sud: "Afirmar con Huidobro que había inventado el creacionismo de una sola pieza antes de pasar a Europa sería inadmisible".¹⁵ In fact, Bary demonstrates briefly, in a study of the literary situation in France since Baudelaire, that many of the basic tenets of creationism had been coming to the forefront "grâce à la crise des valeurs symbolistes",¹⁶ and that, therefore, Huidobro could not have introduced them there.

Accordingly, the first purpose of this thesis will be to trace the origins of the concepts emphasized by creationism in the poetry and other artistic pursuits in France prior to Huidobro's arrival in 1916. The "coincidence" that similar poetic theories were being formulated at the same time in different countries so distant from each other may be partially explained by demonstrating that such a tendency had its origins with the symbolists whose

influence was felt in South America directly or indirectly through translations, and, more significantly, through the poetry of Rubén Darío.

The second purpose of this thesis will be to show that Huidobro's literary career was indeed an untiring quest towards a poetic ideal -- an ideal which could have remained unattainable if Huidobro had not come into direct contact with a group pursuing similar ideals. This will be done through the study of Huidobro's aesthetics and poetry written in Chile, in France, and immediately after leaving France, culminating in Huidobro's perhaps most representative work, his long poem Altazor.

The study of the influence of only one poet, Pierre Reverdy, on the poetry of Huidobro may have simplified this study. However, the conditions of the times, the effervescent exchanges of ideas, the readings in cafés, plus the lack of documentation on these exchanges make the merit of such a restricted study dubious.

Which collaborators to Nord-Sud would most likely have had literary exchanges with Huidobro? Since few facts on Huidobro's stay in France have been revealed,¹⁷ the best criterion left is that of selecting the most constant and most influential contributors to the review, namely, Guillaume Apollinaire, Pierre Reverdy, Max Jacob and Paul Dermée. Guillaume Apollinaire was the rallying point for these young enthusiasts and for many it was through him that they became acquainted with artistic cubism and the beginnings of "literary cubism". His poems and articles printed in the review, although quite numerous, are not representative of the group's poetic credo.

Apollinaire's importance lies especially in the link he forms with the past and in the enthusiasm he generated for all that was new. Pierre Reverdy's contribution was understandably the greatest since he was the director of the review. He and Paul Dermée were instrumental in formulating the Nord-Sud aesthetics. Although the style of Dermée's poems was eclectic, he nevertheless contributed two very important articles to the review. Max Jacob's contribution lies mainly in the large number of items published. He and Apollinaire were the only members of the Nord-Sud group mentioned by Huidobro in his later writings, a fact which confirms the supposition that there was personal contact between some members of the group and the Chilean poet.

Although the four above-mentioned poets all belong to a review which expounded a specific doctrine, that of "literary cubism",¹⁸ each work, although conforming to the theory, possessed its own individuality. Huidobro himself recognized this: "En la época de la revista Nord-Sud, ... todos teníamos más o menos la misma orientación en nuestras búsquedas, pero en el fondo estábamos bastante lejos unos de otros" (OC, I, 680). This consuming search for a new poetry began for Huidobro at the age of eighteen and continued throughout the first period he spent in Chile.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The major contributors to this literary review, which was published between March 1917 and October 1918 and was one of the first to break the literary silence which followed the outbreak of the First World War, include Guillaume Apollinaire, Louis Aragon, André Breton, Paul Dermée, Vicente Huidobro, Max Jacob, the Baroness d'Oettingen, Pierre Reverdy, Philippe Soupault, and Tristan Tzara. The original founders are believed to be Guillaume Apollinaire, Pierre Reverdy, Paul Dermée and Max Jacob.

² Nord-Sud, 1 (March 1917), p. 2. All further reference to Nord-Sud will appear in the text as follows: (NS, 1, 2).

³ (1893-1948).

⁴ Obras completas de Vicente Huidobro, I (Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1963), p. 679. All further references to this work will appear in the text as follows: (OC, I, 679).

⁵ (1889-1960). Before founding Nord-Sud, Reverdy had published three collections of poems: Poèmes en prose (1915), Quelques poèmes (1916), and La Lucarne ovale (1916). Reverdy's initiation to poetry and the arts took place in the atmosphere of the Bateau-Lavoir, the "cubist incubator". In a letter to Sarah Frances Jacob, he described these opportune encounters upon his arrival in Paris in 1910: "A Paris j'ai eu la merveilleuse chance de connaître presque aussitôt arrivé les artistes qui devaient devenir les plus importants de ce temps. D'abord Juan Gris, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, puis Matisse et naturellement par tâche d'huile tous les peintres, sculpteurs, musiciens de ce temps. ... C'est à peine si j'ai dès les débuts connu et fréquenté assidûment deux ou trois poètes -- Apollinaire, Max Jacob, André Salmon". ("The man and the poet in the work of Pierre Reverdy", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Tulane University, 1956, p. 286.).

⁶ "La poesía creacionista y la pugna entre sus progenitores", Cosmópolis, V, 20 (1920), pp. 595-596.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 595.

⁸ Antonio de Undurraga, "Teoría del creacionismo", in Poesía y prosa: antología, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967), p. 71.

⁹ David Bary, Huidobro o la vocación poética (Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1963), p. 20.

¹⁰ Undurraga, p. 81.

¹¹ In Cosmópolis, V, 20 (1920), 589-605, and Literaturas europeas de vanguardia (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1925).

¹² "Al fin se descubre mi maestro", Atenea, II (September 1925), 217-243.

¹³ El ultraísmo: estudios sobre movimientos poéticos de vanguardia en España (Madrid: Gredos, 1963), p. 89.

¹⁴ The main contributors to this controversy today are: Guillermo de Torre, Literaturas, 217-243; Antonio de Undurraga, "Teoría del creacionismo", in Poesía y prosa, 19-186; and Juan-Jacobo Bajarlía, La polémica Reverdy-Huidobro: origen del ultraísmo (Buenos Aires: Devenir, 1964).

¹⁵ pp. 50-51.

¹⁶ Marie Laffranque, "Aux sources de la poésie française contemporaine: la querelle du 'créationnisme'", in Mélanges offerts à Marcel Bataillon par les hispanistes français (Bordeaux: Féret et Fils, 1962), p. 488.

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that Huidobro's name does not appear in the accounts of life in the literary and artistic circles of Paris of 1916 and 1917. I have scanned the pages of works by friends of the cubists and of Guillaume Apollinaire: André Salmon, Souvenirs sans fin: deuxième époque, 1909-1920 (Paris: Gallimard, 1956); Francis Carco, Mémoires d'une autre vie (Genève: Editions du Milieu du Monde, 1942); and Paul Léautaud, Journal littéraire: 1910-1921, III, in Journal littéraire (Paris: Gallimard, 1956).

¹⁸ Reverdy felt that the name "literary cubism", which was used to designate the Nord-Sud group, was not appropriate to describe the aims of their poetry. He hoped that someone would eventually rename it: "L'école littéraire et poétique qui s'affirme en nous n'a pas une appellation particulière; elle n'en existe pas moins. C'est là l'essentiel, le nom qu'elle portera importe peu et viendra un jour, peut-être par hasard, aux lèvres de quelqu'un" (NS, 2, 2). The name was given because the initiators of the group expounded an ideology similar in its basic tenets to that of the cubist painters.

CHAPTER I

HUIDOBRO'S POETRY AND AESTHETICS

PRIOR TO 1917

Vicente Huidobro initiated in Chile a new poetic movement called creationism at a time when the younger generation of poets was seeking an alternative to Modernism. The young poets in Chile became disdainful of "los suspiros llorosos" and "los fastuosos palacios"¹ rampant in modernist poetry and began looking elsewhere for new directions. David Bary describes the situation as follows:

En general, a partir de 1910 se hacía sentir un nuevo clima poético, en el que junto con el abandono de lo artificioso y superficial del primer modernismo y una como vuelta a la "realidad", se notaba un interés por explorar, de manera más clara y directa, los problemas psicológicos y filosóficos del individuo en relación con el mundo y el infinito.²

However, Huidobro sought a poetic renewal, not in social and philosophical themes, as did Gabriela Mistral, but in restructuring the concept of poetry itself. His goal was that of the "aventurero u hombre superior" of Vientos contrarios: "No se contenta con lo que le han enseñado y ha recibido en herencia de sus antecesores. Quiere saber más, quiere ir más lejos, conocer otras cosas".³ His writings from 1910 to the end of 1916 constitute a search for a new poetics based on this principle: "Crear o inventar un sentido nuevo y una técnica nueva".⁴ In his search for this new poetry, he progressed through several phases in a very short period of time: from a romantic to a Modernist type of poetry, and then to an aesthetics akin to that

of the "literary cubists".

How could Huidobro have undergone such a rapid change within a period of six years? Marie Laffranque attributes it to the awakening of Huidobro to the work of Rubén Darío, which in turn revealed to him the works of the French symbolists:

Enfin, des rapports culturels indépendants de l'Espagne ont uni, à la fin du XIX^e siècle et au début du XX^e, la France et l'Amérique du Sud. Ce fait bien connu éclate dans l'oeuvre de Rubén Darío: sa richesse et son rôle historique s'estompent si on méconnaît ce qu'elle doit au commerce direct de Victor Hugo, de Verlaine et des symbolistes français. On sait également que la poésie de Mallarmé a trouvé aussitôt, et d'abord en Amérique du Sud, des traducteurs en langue espagnole.⁵

Also, we must not forget that Huidobro was only eighteen years old when he published his first work and, as his numerous dedications indicate, he was seriously searching for a model among the Spanish, French and even German and Italian poets.⁶ In this chapter, I will study Huidobro's progress in his period of experimentation, leaving the specific contributions of Darío and the French symbolists to be discussed in Chapter II.

Huidobro began forming his own poetic theory around 1912,⁷ but it was not until his Manifestes (1925) that it reached full expression. He described his first book of poems, Ecos del alma (1911), as "un libro romántico, demasiado retórico y hueco".⁸ His conception of the poet was completely in the romantic tradition, as these two stanzas from "La muerte del poeta" indicate:

Murióse el bardo, el de la lira de oro,
El que cantaba trémulo de amor,
De cuyas notas en raudal sonoro
Se escapaba un gemido de dolor.

Murióse abandonado en su cabaña
 Porque el mundo jamás lo comprendió,
 Llamóle loco y en su fiera saña
 Sus ideales por tierra le arrojó.
 (OC, I, 50)

There is also in this collection a dominance of traditionally poetic and romantic themes such as love in the poems "Tú y yo" (OC, I, 76) and "Veleidad" (OC, I, 68); death in "Al cementerio" (OC, I, 53), "Flores muertas" (OC, I, 108-116) and "En la tumba de un poeta" (OC, I, 57); and melancholy in "Noche triste" (OC, I, 75) and "Partió" (OC, I, 58-59).

Furthermore, the poems are, as Huidobro himself realized, too rhetorical. Narrative poems such as "Flores muertas" (OC, I, 108-116), "Ilimay" (OC, I, 102-106) and "La Epopeya de Iquique" (OC, I, 79-89) are written in a traditionally discursive style, abundant in superfluous, commonly used adjectives:

Cierta vez una aldea visitaba
 Y no sé yo por qué secreto instinto
 Hacia el viejo panteón me encaminaba
 Que no lejos sus muros destacaba
 Semejando un antiguo laberinto.
 Las calles recorrí del cementerio
 Y al llegar a un tumba solitaria
 En donde duerme el sueño del misterio
 Bajo la fría losa funeraria
 Algún mortal que en el olvido habita,

 (OC, I, 109)

From these melancholy, romantic poems, a few interesting, although, according to creationist standards, timid images can be singled out, such as these three examples: "Y la luna a la tierra imprime un beso" (OC, I, 55), "¡Y lloró el cielo lágrimas de estrellas!" (OC, I, 58), and "Encontraste tu fosa / Dentro del cáliz de una fresca rosa" (OC, I, 74). Ecós del alma (1911) must be dismissed as a typical

adolescent effort containing few indications of the direction Huidobro's future poetry was to take.

In spite of his light dismissal of Canciones en la noche (1913), several poems are significant because they announce Huidobro's search for a new form and a new language following the example of Rubén Darío in Azul (1888) and Prosas profanas (1896). Huidobro showed his admiration for the Modernists by dedicating the first part, La música dormida (OC, I, 145-157), to don Ramón del Valle Inclán, one of Spain's most ardent enthusiasts of Modernism, whom Darío greatly admired,⁹ and by dedicating a later poem, "Apoteosis", to Rubén Darío in which he sang this great poet's praise:

Gracias, maestro, las musas dicen en coro,
 Porque en el regio alcázar de tus versos
 Sigue sonando el surtidor de oro;
 Porque en ritmos diversos
 Siempre nuevos, siempre grandes, siempre hermosos,
 Resuenan tus extrañas melodías,
 Tus cantos deleitosos,
 Tus divinas armonías,
 Tus sueños orquestales y pomposos.
 (OC, I, 155)

As Huidobro praised Darío for liberating verse, he attempted to eliminate the ponderous and rhetorical from his own poems. In the poem "La muy amada", he conveyed the beauty and delicate quality of his love by using few but well-chosen words:

Es así la muy amada:
 Una porcelana fina,
 Una beldad delicada,
 Humanamente divina.

Su andar mesurado y grave,
 Bella de toda belleza,
 Principescamente suave
 Y suavemente princesa.
 (OC, I, 146)

The several phrases used here convey the meaning more effectively than a sentence would have. The last two lines indicate that Huidobro was becoming aware of the value of the word and exploring its possibilities and variations.

One poem entitled "Nocturno", although very descriptive, abounds in creationist-like images:

Sueñan las flores

 La luna llora,

 Los nobles pinos
 Espiando los confines más lejanos
 Pintan su gran soberbia en los caminos.

Y los senderos
 Por oprimir tus plantas siempre avaros
 Se perfuman de luna y de romeros.

 Un aerolito chicoteó a la luna.
 (OC, I, 156-157)

During the Nord-Sud period, Huidobro began to use, in abundance, images in which plants, animals and inanimate objects were given human characteristics, a technique which he used in the examples quoted above. The main difference between these and traditional images lies in the point of view adopted by the poet.

Several poems in Canciones en la noche illustrate Huidobro's awakening interest in form. In the poems "La obsesión de los dientes" (OC, I, 155) and "Rosas de galantería" (OC, I, 155), he experimented with irregular meter although he retained traditional rhyme. However, the four poems of Japonerías de estío reveal Huidobro's new preoccupation: to merge form and content. The theme is echoed in the mise-en-page: "Triángulo armónico" (OC, I, 158), whose theme is based on the love triangle, is written in the shape of two triangles; "La capilla aldeana" (OC, I, 161), based on a religious theme, is written

in the form of a church. These poems cannot be considered innovations. Compared to Apollinaire's Calligrammes (1918) and especially Mallarmé's Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard (1897), they are very traditional. However, they are important in this study since they announce a poet mentally predisposed to benefit from Reverdy's indefatigable manipulations and purifications of form.

La gruta del silencio (1913) is a much more significant collection of poems than the previous two books. Huidobro made startling changes which can only be explained by his discovery and comprehension of the works of Verlaine, Mallarmé and Rimbaud, all three of whom he quoted in the epigraph to La gruta del silencio and El libro de meditación. The poet assumes a new role; he has a special gift enabling him to perceive things beyond ordinary human conception. The eyes in the poem "El poeta alaba los ojos de la muy amada" are the poet's own eyes:

¡Oh sus ojos!
 ¡Oh sus ojos insondables y profundos y sombríos!
 ¡Oh el misterio de los ríos!
 ¡Oh el misterio de las pálidas estrellas
 Y el misterio de los lagos
 Reflejado en sus pupilas hondas, bellas,
 En sus ojos verdes, vagos!

 Que se abrazan con el cielo,
 Y se enferman de desvelo,
 De nostalgias y de anhelos,
 Y se espiritualizan
 Y se divinizan. . .
 (OC, I, 118-119)

The role Huidobro foresaw for the poet closely resembles the conception Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé attributed to him: according to Baudelaire, only the poet could decipher the "confuses paroles"

and then see a new reality; Rimbaud's voyant could proclaim: "Et j'ai vu quelquefois ce que l'homme a cru voir";¹⁰ and, according to Mallarmé, the poet is that exceptional being forever carrying within himself the unattainable vision of the Absolute.

According to Huidobro, introspection is a necessary prelude to poetic creation:

Quiero que tú seas una auscultadora
De todos los instantes de ti misma,
Quiero que te recorras observadora,
Que en ti lleves una facultad de prisma.
(OC, I, 140)

He maintained that the poet's task is to exteriorize his inner thoughts and feelings:

Alma, musicaliza el dolor de la vida,
Espiritualiza la carne brutal,
Exterioriza tu música dormida
Y cristaliza tu Hora Sentimental.
(OC, I, 139-140)

This idea was by no means new in poetry. From the poems of Les Fleurs du Mal emanated Baudelaire's tormented soul.

In the book of poems La gruta del silencio, there is a marked change in the use of images. These images, whose distinctiveness lies in their unusual point of view, appear more frequently. The following are examples of such images:

Por una gran pendiente se resbaló la noche
Y asoma la pestaña roja-azul de la aurora,
.
(OC, I, 123)

Se aleja una cadena de montes milenarios
Como una caravana larga de dromedarios
Y una montaña blanca que en el silencio vela
En el paisaje pone su castidad de abuela.
(OC, I, 120)

Que en mi cerebro hay alguien que de muy lejos viene.
(OC, I, 122)

However, these promising images have an illustrative function in the poem; they frequently serve to emphasize an emotion which is reflected in Nature. The following images are not as inventive as the above: "La tarde sobre el campo se acuesta fatigada" (OC, I, 123), "La tristeza amarilla de los caminos" (OC, I, 119). They are similar to Herrera y Reissig's pantheistic images. At other times, we can find in Huidobro's poems very baudelairian similes such as this often quoted one: "Van cayendo las horas silenciosas / Como las gotas de agua por un vidrio" (OC, I, 122).

It is in the poem "La alcoba" that Huidobro came the closest to creating an independent image; he took things from exterior reality and rearranged them in a new order: "La alcoba se ha dormido en el espejo, / Todas las cosas tienen aire meditativo" (OC, I, 141). The second verse, by explaining the first, robs it of its effect. The following stanza is more successful as an autonomous image:

En la tarde que baja dolorosa
Las ventanas se mueren de amor,
Y como pulpos de mil ventosas
Se beben toda la sangre del sol.
(OC, I, 142)

However, in the final stage of the poem, Huidobro returned to theorizing and summarized his new obsessions:

Yo tengo la obsesión de las ventanas,
Tengo la obsesión de los ojos clavados,
La de los espejos que tienen alma
Y la de los retratos.
(OC, I, 143)

Pierre Reverdy also was obsessed with windows, with introspection, with inanimate objects which, when personified, divulged the secret

anguish of the soul. But whereas Reverdy used these elements within the poem to create a new poem-object, Huidobro had not yet learned to let the new images he had created produce their own effect. However, a definite conception of poetry was beginning to be formulated.

The date November 15, 1913, witnessed Huidobro's first explicit expression of an aesthetics. In an article published in the third issue of Azul¹¹ and which he included the following year in Pasando y pasando (1914), his criticism of the "lunáticas opiniones" of El Mercurio's literary critic, Omer Emeth, permitted him to express his own conception of what poetry was for the young poets of the times:

Tampoco puede permitirse que nuestro querido párroco esté gritando, a sus feligreses, en estos tiempos, que vayan a beber en los clásicos. Díganos, señor Omer, y ¿dónde bebieron los clásicos? Creemos que en la gran madre Naturaleza. Siendo así el señor Omer debió aconsejar esto y no lo otro que es como decir: los señores clásicos, ellos sí tenían facultad para crear, pero ahora esa facultad no existe, en vista de lo cual imítenlos ustedes a ellos, sean ustedes espejos que devuelven las figuras, sean reflectores, hagan el papel de los fonógrafos y de las cacatuas y no creen nada como lo hicieron ellos.¹²

In this passage, two important points have been stated: the mission of the poet is not to imitate but to create; and the example is given to him by Nature. At a time when it is extremely doubtful whether Huidobro had read Les Peintres cubistes (1913) in which Apollinaire stated, "ce qui différencie le cubisme de l'ancienne peinture, c'est qu'il n'est pas un art d'imitation, mais un art de conception qui tend à s'élever jusqu'à la création",¹³ Huidobro had expressed his own theory that the work of art should be a creation, not an imitation.

In his manifesto Non serviam which he read in 1914 in the Atheneum of Santiago de Chile, Huidobro elaborated more fully on the second point raised in the above-mentioned article. His cry "non serviam" constituted his declaration of independence from Nature. He rejected the servile imitation of Nature which made a slave of the poet rather than a creative being:

Hemos aceptado, sin mayor reflexión, el hecho de que no puede haber otras realidades que las que nos rodean, y no hemos pensado que nosotros también podemos crear realidades en un mundo nuestro, en un mundo que espera su fauna y su flora propias. (OC, I, 653)

He intended to create his own reality, completely different from outer reality: "Yo tendré mis árboles que no serán como los tuyos" (OC, I, 653).

Huidobro's first collection of essays, Pasando y pasando, was published in 1914. It contained several polemical essays, but, of greater interest, it also contained several essays in which Huidobro made himself more precise in his aesthetics. He openly acknowledged his debt to the symbolists and the Modernists and dismissed as "vieux jeu" Marinetti's ideas expressed in the futurist manifesto of 1909. An emphatic rejection of the past and a condemnation of the restrictions it imposed on poetry were made in an essay entitled "Yo":

Odio los fósiles literarios.
Odio todos los ruidos de cadenas que atan.
Odio a los que todavía sueñan con lo antiguo y piensan que nada puede ser superior a lo pasado.¹⁴

He approved of all innovations designed to do away with rhetoric, clichés and traditional techniques.¹⁵ And in his essay "El arte del

sugerimiento", he illustrated one of the ways in which he wanted to rejuvenate the Spanish language:

Hay poetas en Chile de los cuales me decís un sustantivo y yo inmediatamente os digo el adjetivo que le antecede, no que le sigue. Eso ya sería un adelanto. ¡Paloma? Cándida paloma. Ni siquiera paloma cándida.¹⁶

Obviously impressed by Mallarmé, Huidobro outlined in the same essay the benefits of using an exact yet subtle and suggestive language:

El arte del sugerimiento ayuda mucho para la concisión y puede dar a la frase cierta ondulación, cierta gracia y exactitud precisa y ciertos repentines felices y sorprendidos.

El sugerimiento libra de los lazos de unión entre una idea y otra, lazos perfectamente innecesarios, pues el lector los hace intuitivamente en su cerebro.¹⁷

To achieve this goal, Huidobro began developing the idea that created images within the poem could convey the emotion, idea or state of mind of the poet. He also discovered that the elimination of unnecessary links between objects or images could further liberate language and allow the reader to participate more actively. In the same article, he gave an example of his new images. Instead of describing a mountain as "una alta o encumbrada cima", "es preferible que sea una montaña que dialoga con el sol o con pretensiones de desvirgar a la pobre luna".¹⁸ Although retaining the initial idea of a high mountain, the image, by its novelty yet preciseness, creates an impact on the reader's sensibility.

In Pasando y pasando, Huidobro also advocated the rejection of traditional verse which impedes expression, and encouraged the use of free verse which allows thought to determine form. He was obviously aware of the enthusiasm for vers-librisme in France and for

the works of Gustave Kahn and Viérlé-Griffin, both of whom he mentioned in his essay on futurism.¹⁹ This essay is significant in the evolution of Huidobro's work because it indicates that he would seek a more profound conception of art than futurism or Dada could offer. In 1914, he had already dismissed futurism as "vieux jeu", although he applauded the group's desire to reject the past and liberate poetry from rigid rules, especially rules governing form.

The prose poems of Las pagodas ocultas (1914), as the title indicates, constitute a pilgrimage by the poet within himself. According to Huidobro, prior to true creation, the poet must seek solitude, and attempt by introspection to discard all superficial attitudes towards the outer world. In the poem "Las pagodas ocultas", he counseled:

¡Oh Alma mía!, recógete en ti misma y no
busques más los enigmas de la vida en medio del
bullicio; ven al Silencio.

Las almas son Pagodas Ocultas y misteriosas
cuya soledad está llena de mundos y tiene
extrañas resonancias.

Son Pagodas Ocultas en las cuales hay gestos
muy pequeños, apenas perceptibles, pero que
están por sobre todos los que aparecen grandes
a la mente. Sobre las pasiones más fuertes de
la vida estos gestos se muestran y se agitan y
son anunciaciones de cosas superiores.

(OC, I, 169)

The poet's point of departure must be Nature in which he can find the "verdadero sentido de todo. El sentido de los árboles, del río y del fuego; el sentido de las montañas y de la noche; el sentido de la tierra y del aire, del amor y del dolor" (OC, I, 170). Then he

advised the poet to turn within himself and meditate on what he has seen:

Alma mía, penetra sin miedo en la Divina
Pagoda, la luz de la luna que entra por la puerta te
acompañará algunos pasos; donde termina su dominio
detente, medita sobre todo lo que has visto y luego
pasa la línea a la obscuridad completa; pronto tus
ojos se acostumbrarán a ella. (OC, I, 169)

It is during this state of "obscuridad completa" that the poet creates, for, in the prose poem "Mis palabras", Huidobro exclaimed: "¡Oh fructífero Silencio, oh Meditación fecundadora!, que en mi cerebro habéis padecido una larga paciencia de huevecillo" (OC, I, 171).

The prose poems of Las pagodas ocultas do not seek to create something new as Huidobro had announced in Pasando y pasando. The images used are still very baudelairian as in "La Montaña": "La Montaña se levanta a lo lejos como un cáliz en el instante del ofrecimiento supremo" (OC, I, 176). The poet seeks to come in intimate contact with Nature and know it in all its aspects as in the following poems: "El poeta dijo una tarde los psalmos del Árbol" (OC, I, 171-174), "El Río" (OC, I, 174-175), "La Montaña" (OC, I, 176-177), "Habla la primavera" (OC, I, 196), "Habla el verano" (OC, I, 197), "Habla el otoño" (OC, I, 197-198), "Habla el invierno" (OC, I, 198-199), and in all the poems included in the part entitled El libro de la Noche (OC, I, 199-209). These poems are concerned with the period of time preparatory to creation; the poet is gathering his material until he can finally declare: "Ya no hay puertas cerradas para mi espíritu, porque ya poseo la suave tristeza llena de bondad de los profundos" (OC, I, 171).

In the long poem Adán (1916), Huidobro tried to apply the theory advanced in his theoretical writings. Beginning in a void, he gradually created a whole new world as seen through the eyes of Adán, the ideal poet, whose vision is unaffected and unencumbered by traditional values:

Única comprensión verdadera,
Porque todo miraba por vez primera
Libre de adquisiciones anteriores,
Libre de herencias.
(OC, I, 254)

As the poem progresses, Adán's intelligence awakens (OC, I, 233). For Huidobro, the intellect was of primordial importance in the act of creation. Having absorbed all that he has seen, Adán then reorders it in his mind:

Todos los ruidos de la tierra y los rugidos
De los animales hacían su nido
Cómico y absoluto en sus oídos,
Repercutían en su cerebro,
El cual los ordenaba,
Y se agrandaban en su alma.
(OC, I, 234)

This point had already been stressed in Las pagodas ocultas. The fruit of his labors, Abel and Caín, represent two different aims of poetry; one "se esparce por la tierra", the other "sube al vacío" (OC, I, 251). Abel represents the mallarmean poet who

. . . ama los misterios
Y se los crea donde no pueden verlos,
Allá detrás del firmamento.
(OC, I, 252)

Caín on the other hand, "es la ciencia, / El puro panteísmo" (OC, I, 251). The tower of Babel, built by the descendants of Caín, represents the rebellion against poetry which aspires towards an Absolute. This biblical allegory was used by Huidobro to illustrate

the creative process: the poet can only create after having been in intimate contact with Nature, interiorized it and reordered it. In summary, Huidobro had not yet ceased to theorize in favor of constructive applications of his theory.

Until 1916, Huidobro's poetry was still pantheistic and didactic. This first stage in his poetic career represents a period of experimentation with new means of expression but most importantly a period of formation of a basic aesthetics. The first poem of El espejo de agua, "Arte poética", consolidates the theory which Huidobro had haphazardly expressed in several works before 1916. It is also significant since it contains the most important principles of creationism. Huidobro maintained that several interpretations could result from the same verse. Poetry should serve as a stimulus to the imagination of the reader: "Que el verso sea como una llave / Que abra mil puertas" (OC, I, 255). The catalyst may be the most insignificant thing or event such as "una hoja cae; algo pasa volando" (OC, I, 255). Although the poet may take nature as his point of departure and use its creative process or "procedimientos", it is his intellect which makes the poem or the image totally unique. Because he can create a new, poetic reality, the poet is a god, but "un pequeño Dios" since he must rely on Nature to provide the matter to which he will give shape. Huidobro did not elaborate on the manner in which this was to be accomplished. He did stress however that the things must be said in such a way that they appear to occur or be experienced rather than merely being evoked or sung:

Inventa mundos nuevos . . .

 Por qué cantáis la rosa, ¡oh Poetas!
 Hacedla florecer en el poema;

 (OC, I, 255)

The publication date of El espejo de agua was believed to be important because of the creationist doctrine which was, for the first time, formally and concisely introduced in the poem "Arte poética". But, as we have established in the study of Huidobro's previous works, his theory began to be formed in 1912 and had been his main concern in most of his writings. The doubts concerning the publication date of El espejo de agua stem from the startling changes apparent in the poems themselves. Most of these poems were published in French in Nord-Sud. The critics who attempted to establish whether Reverdy influenced Huidobro had to determine the date of the controversial book. We must not eliminate the possibility that a book using the same title was published in 1916 and that the poems were revised at a later date. It should be noted that only one critic, David Bary, seriously studies the poems published in El espejo de agua in relation to Huidobro's other works, and concludes that the book of poems was published in 1918 and that "recurrió Huidobro a la dudosa maniobra de antedatar algunos de sus escritos".²⁰

Certain poems in this book, such as "El espejo de agua", are still discursive and, as these images illustrate, have overtones of Modernism:

Mi espejo, más profundo que el orbe
 Donde todos los cisnes se ahogaron.
 (OC, I, 255)

Sobre sus olas, bajo cielos sonámbulos,
 Mis ensueños se alejan como barcos.
 (OC, I, 256)

Other poems, such as "Nocturno II", already apply the epigraph of Horizon carré (1917): "Rien d'anecdotique ni de descriptif. L'émotion doit naître de la seule vertu créatrice" (OC, I, 261). "Nocturno II" is reproduced below:

La pieza desierta;
 Cerrada está la puerta;
 Se siente irse la luz.

Las sombras salen de debajo de los muebles,
 Y allá lejos, los objetos perdidos
 Se ríen.

La noche.

La alcoba se inunda.
 Estoy perdido.
 Un grito lleno de angustia;
 Nadie ha respondido.
 (OC, I, 258)

The mood or emotion of the poem is an acute feeling of anguish caused by solitude and mystery -- a theme which prevails in most of Reverdy's early poems. Each image, although not linked grammatically with the others, contributes to the total effect. The only connection between them is the emotion itself. This emotion is achieved by a kind of "magie incantatoire", resulting from the specific use Huidobro made of language. He described this technique in a lecture given in the Atheneum of Madrid in 1921 and later published in Manifestes:

Aparte de la significación gramatical del lenguaje, hay otra, una significación mágica, que es la única que nos interesa. Uno es el lenguaje objetivo que sirve para nombrar las cosas del mundo sin sacarlas fuera de su calidad de inventario; el otro rompe esa norma convencional y en él las palabras pierden su representación

estricta para adquirir otra más profunda y como rodeada de un aura luminosa que debe elevar al lector del plano habitual y envolverlo en una atmósfera encantada. (OC, I, 654)

The poem "Nocturno II" is carefully structured: there is, at first, a hint of anguish caused by solitude ("La pieza desierta"); then there is a gradual invasion and a distinct hostility of the material world ("Las sombras salen de debajo de los muebles"); finally, the anguished cry, rather than bringing the nightmare to an end, merely accentuates the utter solitude of the unidentified person ("Nadie ha respondido"). This poem is populated with mysterious figures; only their presence is felt. Since this poem is designed to produce a specific emotion in the reader, the fact that only contours are present permits his imagination to respond more easily to suggestion. In order to create most of the images of these poems, Huidobro reverted to the traditional technique of personification. The following examples use this technique: "Las cosas se fatigan" (OC, I, 256), "Las hojas lloran" (OC, I, 256), "Un poco de muerte / Tiembla en los rincones" (OC, I, 257), "Y el viento llora en el estanque" (OC, I, 257). This type of image was later dismissed by Huidobro as not representative of creationist images.

There is, in most of the poems of El espejo de agua, a deliberate, rational structure and progression designed to lead the reader through the specific experience of each poem. Huidobro's previous poetic works did not announce such a degree of economy and conciseness. I must temporarily conclude, in view of the doubt focused on the publication date of El espejo de agua and of certain changes in the poems, that it is doubtful that the book of poems in question was

published in 1916.

In this formative period, the basic principles of creationism had been presented: the poem must be a careful, deliberate structure; it should evoke an emotion through a series of disconnected images; and the language must be concise and precise. Although he had developed his ideas in theory, Huidobro did not appear, by the end of 1916, to be able to apply them. Perhaps it was frustration as much as a desire to escape the "atmósfera irrespirable" of Chile which prompted him to seek "climas más favorables para los cateadores de minas" (OC, I, 679). He temporarily found such an atmosphere in France amidst the Nord-Sud group.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Hugo Montes and Julio Orlandi, Historia de la literatura chilena, 2nd ed. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial del Pacífico, 1957), p. 149.

² "Vicente Huidobro: comienzos de una vocación poética", Revista Iberoamericana, XXIII, 45 (1958), p. 22.

³ (OC, I, 752). This statement also forms the basis of Huidobro's theory of creationism.

⁴ Gerardo Diego, "Poesía y creacionismo de Vicente Huidobro", Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 222 (June, 1968), p. 538.

⁵ "Aux sources de la poésie espagnole contemporaine: la querelle du 'créationnisme'", in Mélanges offerts à Marcel Bataillon par les hispanistes français (Bordeaux: Féret et fils, 1962), p. 481.

⁶ In some instances, he merely translated freely other poet's works such as "Otoñal" (OC, I, 61).

⁷ Huidobro himself gives the date 1912: "El creacionismo no es una escuela que yo haya querido imponer; es una teoría que yo comencé a elaborar hacia 1912" (OC, I, 672).

⁸ Vicente Huidobro, Pasando y pasando (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Chile, 1914), p. 26.

⁹ Rubén Darío, Poesía, V, in Obras completas (Madrid: Ediciones Castilla, 1953), p. 1042.

¹⁰ Oeuvres (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 129.

¹¹ Azul is the name of a review founded by Huidobro in 1913 and named after the book of poems, Azul, by Rubén Darío.

¹² p. 100.

¹³ Guillaume Apollinaire, Les peintres cubistes: méditations esthétiques, 10th ed. (Paris: "Athéna", 1950), p. 24.

¹⁴ Pasando, p. 29.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 142.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 142.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 167.

²⁰ David Bary, Huidobro o la vocación poética (Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1963). Other critics who have discussed the publication date of El espejo de agua include: Juan Jacobo Bajarliá in La polémica Reverdy-Huidobro (Buenos Aires: Devenir, 1964), p. 20; and Antonio de Undurraga in his long essay "Teoría del creacionismo" in Poesía y prosa: antología, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967), pp. 82-83. Both conclude, mostly on the basis of several letters exchanged by Huidobro and Ángel Cruchaga, a Chilean, in which the former begged Cruchaga to provide concrete evidence of the publication date of his plaque, that El espejo de agua was published in 1916. Braulio Arenas in the preface to the Obras completas de Vicente Huidobro exclaims: "¡Y pensar que nosotros hojeamos en este momento dicha edición de 1916!" (p. 23). One may wonder why Undurraga, whose essay on the theory of creationism is extremely well documented, did not have access to this first edition. Holmes, in a poorly documented book, Vicente Huidobro and Creationism (New York: Columbia University, 1934), states that: "Certain poems of the collection El espejo de agua were originally published in Chilean magazines during the period 1913 to 1915. The entire series, however, was first issued in book form in 1916" (p. 14). Cedomil Goic in La poesía de Vicente Huidobro (Santiago: Ediciones de Los Anales de la Universidad de Chile, 1956), and Ana María Nicholson, in an unpublished doctoral dissertation, "Vicente Huidobro and Creationism", accept 1916 as the date of publication.

CHAPTER II

AN AESTHETIC ENCOUNTER: THE NORD-SUD AESTHETICS AND THE THEORY OF CREATIONISM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1917 in France, Vicente Huidobro became exposed to a conception of poetry akin to the one he had developed in his various theoretical writings in Chile. The aesthetics of the Nord-Sud group, of which Huidobro was a member, was dispersed in various essays published in the review between March 1917 and October 1918. In this chapter, I will delineate the five principles constituting the Nord-Sud aesthetics and compare them to Huidobro's theories formulated prior to 1917 and to his theory of creationism expounded in Manifestes.¹

The relevant essays published in Nord-Sud are the following: Paul Dermée, "Quand le symbolisme fut mort" (NS, 1, 2-4), "Intelligence et création" (NS, 6-7, 5), "Un prochain âge classique" (NS, 11, 3-4); Pierre Reverdy, "Sur le cubisme" (NS, 1, 5-7), "Essai d'esthétique littéraire" (NS, 4-5, 4-6), "L'Emotion" (NS, 8, 3-6), "Tradition" (NS, 12, [7]), "L'Image" (NS, 13, [3-6]), "Syntaxe" (NS, 14, [3]), "Note" (NS, 16, [3]); Max Jacob, "Les Mots en liberté" (NS, 9, 3-5); Georges Braque, "Pensées et réflexions sur la peinture" (NS, 10, 3-5). In order to clarify some points, I have used two additional theoretical texts by Reverdy: Self Défense² and "L'Esthétique et l'esprit".³

In the latter essay, Reverdy disclosed the importance he

attributed to the theoretical writings published in Nord-Sud:

En 1916 -- le moment était venu où l'on pouvait parler d'esthétique, je l'ai fait dans Nord-Sud parce que l'époque était à l'organisation, au rassemblement des idées, parce que la fantaisie faisait place à un plus grand besoin de structure et que ce sentiment parlait assez fort en moi, pour que je fondasse une revue pour l'exprimer et pousser une idée à la réalité. L'événement m'a donné entièrement raison. Les jeunes gens qui naissaient au monde littéraire à ce moment se groupèrent dans cet organe de combat -- le dernier d'un genre qui n'a plus aujourd'hui le droit de vivre -- et une esthétique vraiment nouvelle s'affirma attirant vivement l'attention que les oeuvres isolées avaient jusque là laissée distraite.⁴

As this statement indicates, Reverdy saw the need, after a period of ebullience, of great activity and discovery in the arts, for a period of organization, synthesis and discipline which would incorporate the new ideas and techniques which heretofore had been introduced haphazardly in the literary world.

The Nord-Sud aesthetics was concerned primarily with "la façon de créer" (NS, 1, 4) since there was a general consensus among the most important members of the review that the distinguishing characteristics of a literary group are the techniques used to achieve a specific result. In "Essai d'esthétique littéraire", Reverdy defined the poem as "un poème, c'est-à-dire une oeuvre créée avec des moyens qui dégagent comme résultat un sentiment poétique, il faut trouver les moyens propres à ce genre et les faire concourir au résultat" (NS, 4-5, 5).

Richard L. Admussen, in his detailed study of the literary review Nord-Sud, delineated clearly and succinctly what he believed to be the five principles comprising the review's aesthetics.⁵ I have accepted the five points proposed by Admussen since they

summarize all the important ideas proposed in the essays of the review. However, I have made certain changes in the order of presentation to permit a more natural discussion. Nevertheless, the division into five principles remains an artificial means used to facilitate the discussion of a fluid, cohesive aesthetics.

The Nord-Sud aesthetics advocated:

1. the creation of an autonomous work of art and the rejection of the anecdotal and the descriptive;
2. the construction of images made up of disparate elements;
3. the provocation of an artistic emotion in the reader;
4. the return to a classic style;
5. the replacement of traditional syntax and punctuation by a new syntax based on typographical dispersion.

As I will attempt to demonstrate in this chapter, these principles were not radically new. They had been assuming an increasingly important role in modern poetry, dating back to Baudelaire, and truly gained prominence with the advent of the "literary cubists". The Nord-Sud group fused chosen poetic elements into a synthetic, highly organized aesthetics.

I

One of the elements which Reverdy admired in the cubist paintings, as demonstrated in this passage from "Sur le cubisme", was the absence of anecdote and description: "Comme la perspective est un moyen de représenter les objets selon leur apparence visuelle, il y a dans le cubisme les moyens de construire le tableau en ne tenant compte des objets que comme élément et non au point de vue

anecdotique" (NS, 1, 6). Rejecting the element of ratiocination in poetry, Dermée cited Chinese, Persian and Arabic poetry as examples of poetry independent of anecdote, description and logical development (NS, 1, 4). In "Essai d'esthétique littéraire", Reverdy explained his reason for rejecting the anecdote. He claimed that a poet who seeks to imitate or interpret life cannot capture the full force and meaning of the event, thus reducing his art to a position inferior to life (NS, 4-5, 5). Therefore, he condemned the novel of adventure, "le triomphe de l'anecdote" (NS, 8, 3), whose entire reason for being would disappear if the plot and sentiment were removed. On the other hand, he recognized some merit in the works of the Naturalists, since they sacrificed the strength of the story in their efforts to move the reader: "Les moyens littéraires prenaient déjà plus d'importance à côté de l'élément anecdotique" (NS, 8, 4).

The Nord-Sud group aspired to produce a unified and autonomous poem:

Plus l'émotion est prise près de sa source, plus
elle est forte, mieux elle se communique! Un développement
littéraire est toujours l'obscurcissement d'un état d'âme.
Or, la complexité d'un instant est la plus forte unité
qu'on puisse donner à une oeuvre. (NS, 1, 4)

The ultimate aim of the theoreticians of Nord-Sud was to create a poem which, instead of describing an event or sentiments, would produce an emotion or reveal an état d'âme. They conceived of the poem as an organic, highly structured whole whose parts are meaningless in themselves, yet are indispensable in creating the total effect: "Toutes les parties doivent avoir leur place strictement déterminée selon leur fonction et leur importance. L'objet importe ici et non tel ou tel de ses éléments" (NS, 1, 3).

The Nord-Sud group rejected the traditional view of reality as their subject and maintained that art must free itself from life in order to assume a superior role. If art cannot use reality as its subject, what then must constitute the subject of the work of art? The Nord-Sud group proposed to follow the example set by the cubist painters whose aims were explained by Reverdy in his essay, "Sur le cubisme":

Nous sommes à une époque de création artistique où l'on ne raconte plus des histoires plus ou moins agréablement mais où l'on crée des oeuvres qui, en se détachant de la vie, y rentrent parce qu'elles ont une existence propre, en dehors de l'évocation ou de la reproduction des choses de la vie. Par là, l'Art d'aujourd'hui est un art de grande réalité. Mais il faut entendre réalité artistique et non réalisme. (NS, 1, 7)

According to the theorists, the artistic reality created by the poet must be the result of a purposive restructuring of experience. The poet must be a seer who can "dégager de l'objet qui frappe son regard, ses traits spirituels, qui se traduiront plastiquement et qui, selon la vision recherchée, véhiculeront l'abstrait jusqu'au concret".⁶

For the Nord-Sud theorists, "l'esprit du poète" was of primordial importance in the creative act. They maintained that there is no poetry in objects; only man can put it there. With the intellect as intermediary, objects in exterior reality can be reordered and reshaped so as to be more accessible to interior reality. Once the original exterior impetus for the poem has been transformed and conceptualized, the resultant work is truly autonomous and assumes a status superior to its source-object (NS, 4-5, 6).

Aestheticism, the conception that art is self-sufficient, that it excludes all moral, social and political values, gained

prominence in France with the advent of the Parnassians and their theory of "l'Art pour l'Art". Théophile Gautier, in his theory and in such a work as Émaux et camées (1852), showed that art must be beautiful, not useful: "Il n'y a de vraiment beau que ce qui ne peut servir à rien; tout ce qui est utile est laid".⁷ In his poems, he devoted his energy to the assiduous task of captivating beauty in verse. Although the poems of Les Fleurs du Mal attest to a highly moral sensibility, Charles Baudelaire maintained in his theory that poetry must be autonomous:

Je dis que, si le poète a poursuivi un but moral, il a diminué sa force poétique; et il n'est pas imprudent de parier que son oeuvre sera mauvaise. La poésie ne peut pas, sous peine de mort ou de défaillance, s'assimiler à la science ou à la morale; elle n'a pas la Vérité pour objet, elle n'a qu'elle-même.⁸

Probably the purest and most intense advocate of aestheticism among the symbolists was Stéphane Mallarmé. The world of phenomena had no place in his poems. He created his own world in which language and the poetic act were the only reality. The atmosphere in Un coup de dés emanates exclusively from the poem and from the relationship between words, thus creating a truly poetic reality.

Avant-garde poetry, which was in close contact with the plastic arts due mainly to Guillaume Apollinaire, who has been called the apologist for the cubist painters, found in artistic cubism a reassertion of the independence of the work of art. In the avant-garde circles, it was generally recognized that discoveries in art, but especially science, were indicating that reality is a product of the mind. The cubist painters decided that they should devote their efforts to the search for a new reality -- an artistic reality:

La vraisemblance n'a plus aucune importance, car tout est sacrifié par l'artiste aux vérités, aux nécessités d'une nature supérieure qu'il suppose sans la découvrir. Le sujet ne compte plus ou s'il compte c'est à peine.⁹

Typical of the synthetic phase of cubism, Juan Gris' tableaux-objets were designed to create artistic objects borrowed "non à la réalité de vision mais à la réalité de conception".¹⁰ Among the poets of that period, Max Jacob emerges as an advocate of Art for Art's sake. Like Pierre Reverdy, Jacob was drawn to the intellectual cubism of Juan Gris. Learning from Gris that art is the creation of aesthetic objects, Jacob wrote poems to be judged for themselves -- for their purity, their beauty -- and not to describe an event or provide new insight into some aspect of exterior reality. He emphasized this point in the preface to Le Cornet à dés (1917): "Une oeuvre d'art vaut par elle-même et non par les confrontations qu'on en peut faire avec la réalité".¹¹ Although he did not eliminate the subject from his poems (many of his poèmes en prose in Le Cornet à dés relate an event as in "Fable sans moralité"¹²), the subject itself was of little importance. In his aspiration to produce a perfect work of art, Jacob concentrated on problems of form. At times, form appears to dictate the direction the poem takes.

Rubén Darío, in seeking to rejuvenate Spanish verse, adopted, perhaps from the Parnassians, the idea that the main purpose of art is to attain an aesthetic Beauty. In the first stanza of the poem "Yo persigo una forma", "Yo persigo una forma que no encuentra mi estilo",¹³ Darío expressed the mallarmean idea that the Beauty he seeks is beyond his reach and that words can never capture it.

As I demonstrated in Chapter I, Huidobro's early poetry was slowly moving towards a less discursive, more condensed and bare verse. Several times in his early essays, he declared himself opposed to rhetoric.¹⁴ It was not until the publication of Horizon carré that he emphatically denounced the use of the anecdote in poetry: "Rien d'anecdotique ni de descriptif" (OC, I, 261). In his theoretical writings, Non serviam, Pasando y pasando and the preface to Adán, Huidobro had stressed many times the importance of creating rather than imitating in producing a work of art. In his later aesthetical writings included in Manifestes, he not only continued to insist that the primary function of the poet was to create, but he also clarified previous statements made in Chile on the way in which the work of art was to be realized. Like Reverdy and Dermée, he attributed great importance to the intellect whose role was to reorder and reshape things found in Nature: "El artista obtiene sus motivos y sus elementos del mundo objetivo, los transforma y combina, y los devuelve al mundo objetivo bajo la forma de nuevos hechos" (OC, I, 659). His early writings did not specify how this was to be achieved in the creative process. Nearly ten years later in his essay "La creación pura", he explained his statement and emphasized its importance in his theory of creationism by italicizing almost the entire text quoted below:

. . . el hombre nunca estuvo más cerca de la Naturaleza que ahora que ya no busca imitarla en sus apariencias, sino hacer lo mismo que ella, imitándola en el plano de sus leyes constructivas, en la realización de un todo, en el mecanismo de la producción de nuevas formas. (OC, I, 659)

It was not until after his contact with the Nord-Sud group that Huidobro explicitly said that the work of art had to be an entity, in-

dependent and autonomous. It was in the epigraph to Horizon carré that he advocated: "Créer un poème en empruntant à la vie ses motifs et en les transformant pour leur donner une vie nouvelle et indépendante" (OC, I, 261).

In his important essay "El creacionismo", Huidobro described the extremely controlled structure of the created poem:

Es un poema en el que cada parte constitutiva, y todo el conjunto, muestra un hecho nuevo, independiente del mundo externo, desligado de cualquiera otra realidad que no sea la propia, pues toma su puesto en el mundo como un fenómeno singular, aparte y distinto de los demás fenómenos. (OC, I, 673)

From this definition, it is apparent that in the theory of the review Nord-Sud as well as in the theory of creationism of Huidobro, the independence of the work necessarily implies a rigid interdependence of the elements comprising the work of art. Consequently, each element loses its individuality in order to contribute to the effect produced by the ensemble. The principle of the autonomy of the work of art is the primordial principle governing the theory of Nord-Sud and from which the other principles logically follow.

II

The principal means by which the group proposed to create these autonomous poems, was by the extensive use of the image made up of elements "les plus divers et en apparence les plus disparates" (NS, 1, 4). Dermée cursorily mentioned the image in his "Nord-Sud manifesto", that is, his essay "Quand le symbolisme fut mort". It was Reverdy who proclaimed the importance of the image in making the poem an analogical construct. He conceived of the image as "une création pure de l'esprit" (NS, 13, [3]). He claimed that there are

no images in nature; that it is the will of the poet which transforms the "informe et flou" into an image. To form this image, he rejected all comparison and strongly advocated the "rapprochement de deux réalités plus ou moins éloignées" (NS, 13, [3]). He stipulated that these realities be distant but just, because the gratuitous or the inaccurate image would have no impact on the reader: "Plus les rapports des deux réalités rapprochées seront lointains et justes, plus l'image sera forte -- plus elle aura de puissance émotive et de réalité poétique" (NS, 13, [3]). Reverdy rejected the element of surprise which Apollinaire deemed almost indispensable in the truly effective image.

Even traditionally, the image constituted an integral part of poetry. However, the preference for images made up of disparate elements began to gain prominence in France with Baudelaire and his theory of correspondences. He claimed that only the imagination of the poet could discern from the "confuses paroles" an order, a relationship between things.¹⁵ In the poem "Une charogne", Baudelaire created a comparison which is shocking because of its incongruity: "Et le ciel regardait la carcasse superbe / Comme une fleur s'épanouir".¹⁶ Similarly, in expressing the duality of woman, he combined an adjective and a noun which semantically are opposed to each other: "O fangeuse grandeur! sublime ignominie".¹⁷ Rimbaud's famous poem "Voyelles" is made up of images juxtaposed and without connectives except for the arbitrary relationships the reader can establish. At other times, as in the poem "Délires II", Rimbaud combined the abstract and the concrete in a single image:

-- l'Eternité
C'est la mer mêlée
Au soleil¹⁸

In this definition, he gave tangibility to an abstract concept.

The futurists emphasized the effectiveness of the juxtaposed image. They stipulated that the image must create surprise and wonder in order to be effective: "Plus les images contiennent des rapports vastes, plus elles gardent longtemps leur force ahurissante".¹⁹ Similarly, Guillaume Apollinaire enthusiastically condoned the use of the image-choc as in this image from "Zone": "Bergère ô tour Eiffel".²⁰ He deliberately eliminated all superfluous words, including connectives, to increase the shock effect of this original view of the Eiffel Tower, seen as a shepherdess guarding her flock, the city of Paris. Much more effective, not in isolation but within the context of the poem, is the final image of "Zone": "Soleil coupé".²¹ It represents the decapitation of mankind; man without God.

The independent image did not constitute an important part of Reverdy's early poems. At times, he juxtaposed a concrete and an abstract word, and let them act upon each other, as in the following two examples: "La cloche coeur"²² and "Le soleil assassin".²³ The image is invigorated by the elimination of all connectives establishing formal relationships. Reverdy as well as Huidobro realized that a more active participation was required of the reader when confronted with these denuded images.

In Spanish America, the image emerges as an important element in the poems of the uruguayan poet Julio Herrera y Reissig,²⁴ whom

Huidobro quoted in the epigraph to "Amanecer poblano" (OC, I, 123).

Herrera y Reissig's poems are rich in metaphors:

.
el crepúsculo ha puesto largos toques naranjas,
Amizclan una abuela paz de las Escrituras

los vahos que trascienden a vacunos y cerdos...
Y palomas violetas salen como recuerdos
de las viejas paredes arrugadas y oscuras.²⁵

... el grito
de un vapor fué a morir a tu ventana.

Los sauces padecían con los vagos
insomnios del molino... La profunda
superficialidad de tus halagos

se arrepintió en el mar... ¡Y en las riberas
echóse a descansar, meditabunda,
la caravana azul de tus ojeras!...²⁶

The unconventional use of such words as "naranjas" and "abuela" (nouns used as adjectives) and "vacunos" (an adjective used as a noun) attests to an unusual liberty with words. Elements of nature in the above examples appear humanized, transformed from the inanimate into the animate. These images do not possess the power necessary to incite an actual experience of emotion in the reader.

In Pasando y pasando, Huidobro had expressed his admiration for those who perceived "las relaciones más lejanas de las cosas",²⁷ and, in the poem "La alcoba", he had attempted, with mediocre success, to put this theory into practice (OC, I, 141-143). In his later theoretical writings, he continued to insist on the importance of the created image. Like Reverdy, he persisted to maintain that the elements of the image must be distant and just in order to provoke an emotion:

... el poeta es aquel que sorprende la relación oculta que existe entre las cosas más lejanas, los ocultos hilos que las unen. Hay que pulsar aquellos hilos como las cuerdas de un arpa, y producir una resonancia que ponga en movimiento las dos realidades lejanas. (OC, I, 666)

But he did not exclude the fact that the effect would be more transcendental if the element of surprise were also present (OC, I, 666).

III

The criterion or verification for the quality of the image was the degree to which it conveyed the emotion desired: "Ce qui est grand ce n'est pas l'image -- mais l'émotion qu'elle provoque; si cette dernière est grande on estimera l'image à sa mesure" (NS, 13, [4]). Reverdy criticized the symbolists for their failure to create a truly organic poem capable of provoking an artistic emotion: "Ils n'extériorisèrent jamais qu'un sentiment momentané et nous voulons avec la connaissance de tous les sentiments, comme éléments, créer une émotion neuve et purement poétique" (NS, 4-5, 4). An emotion was considered to be purely poetic when it appealed to the intellect:

Certains voudront sans doute demander à l'esprit
autre chose que de la beauté pure et c'est qu'ils
n'auront pas pu comprendre que l'esprit peut au moins
tenter de s'élever jusqu'à ce niveau et que le mystère
qui se dégage d'une oeuvre dont le lecteur est ému sans
s'expliquer comment elle a été composée est la plus
haute émotion qu'on n'ait jamais pu atteindre en art. (NS, 8, 6)

As this statement indicates, the carefully planned structure of the poem is indispensable in creating the artistic emotion.

Before the romantics, there were two purposes for arousing

an emotion in the reader: to delight him, give him aesthetic pleasure; and to incite him to virtue or action. However, with the French romantics, the doctrine that art describes emotion became dominant. Their poems dwell on the interior emotions of the poet and do not constitute an actual experience for the reader, who is treated as an onlooker. In the poetry of the symbolists, there is an interpenetration of the poet's emotion with the object of his contemplation. Baudelaire expressed this idea in the last verse of "Correspondances":

.
 Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,
 Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,
 Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.²⁸

However, at times he was too explicit in his poems. The first verse of "Spleen", "Quand le ciel bas et lourd pèse comme un couvercle",²⁹ is robbed of most of its effect by the superfluous adjectives and verb.

Mallarmé succeeded in producing an indefinite poetic effect in somewhat the same way advocated by Reverdy. He used cumulative effects; he controlled the arrangement of words forming the line or the whole poem as Reverdy controlled the arrangement of the images. The example par excellence is the poem Un coup de dés in which fragmentation, ambiguity, ambivalence, visual images, visual sonorities all combine to produce the total aesthetic effect.³⁰ The effectiveness of the visual image over the emotional description was emphasized by Rémy de Gourmont in Le Problème du style (1902). He maintained that all emotional and cerebral activity originated as sense impressions which then went to the mind as images. He asserted that a writer, in expressing these, must choose one of two courses:

L'un prend une phrase toute faite, ou rédige une phrase facile, à laquelle il suppose, trompé par sa propre émotion, une valeur émotive; l'autre, avec des mots qui ne sont que des poignées de glaise, construit les membres de son oeuvre et dresse une statue qui, belle ou gauche, lourde ou ailée, gardera tout de même, dans son attitude, un peu de la vie qui animait les mains dont elle fut pétrie.³¹

He considered the work of the latter artist more effective in inciting the reader to experience first-hand the emotion originally felt by the artist.

Apollinaire, although not attempting to produce a specific emotion in his poems, used the technique of accumulation in his simultaneist poems. In "Zone", he used the technique of juxtaposing events occurring at different times:

Te voici à Marseille au milieu des pastèques
 Te voici à Coblenz à l'hôtel du Géant
 Te voici à Rome assis sous un néflier du Japon³²

The use of the present tense in describing past events enabled Apollinaire to capture the totality and unity of his existence. In Calligrammes (1918), the poème-conversation, "Lundi rue Christine", applies the cubist technique of collage in which Apollinaire attempted to capture normal everyday conversations as he heard them in his long walks through Paris or in cafés, and wrote them down in the disconnected, haphazard order he heard them:

Trois becs de gaz allumés
 La patronne est poitrinaire
 Quand tu auras fini nous jouerons une partie de jacquet
 Un chef d'orchestre qui a mal à la gorge
 Quand tu viendras à Tunis je te ferai fumer du kief³³

The seemingly disconnected verses of the poems "Les Fenêtres", "Liens", and "Arbre" are deliberately arranged in an order determined by the poet and unite to form a synthesis requiring active participa-

tion from the reader. For example, the poem "Liens" by means of disconnected phrases, always conveys the idea of bonds:

Cordes faites de cris

Sons de cloches à travers l'Europe
Siècles pendus³⁴

Although Apollinaire's primary purpose in his poems was not to provoke an emotion in the reader, the procedure he used in many poems in Calligrammes,³⁵ an accumulation which results in a synthesis, was very similar to the procedure advocated by Pierre Reverdy in Nord-Sud. Reverdy confirmed the importance of the emotion provoked through objects in exterior reality: "La création est un mouvement de l'intérieur à l'extérieur et non pas de l'extérieur sur la façade".³⁶ These few verses from La Lucarne ovale (1916) manage, without connectives, to emphasize the solitude and unexpectedness of death:

Violon cassé
Livre fermé
Bouche muette³⁷

In Spanish-American literature, Darío also used the evocative power of the image. He learned, probably from the symbolists, that the poet could suggest emotions or states of mind by means of the image. In "Sonatina", he evoked the feeling of anéantissement:

La princesa está pálida en su silla de oro,
está mudo el teclado de su clave sonoro,
y en un vaso, olvidada, se desmaya una flor.³⁸

This new discovery enabled him to put some reserve in a poetry heretofore abundant in "runaway sentiment".³⁹

However, in South American poetry, it was not until Huidobro and another Chilean, Juan Guzmán Cruchaga,⁴⁰ that the poem was

deliberately structured to provoke in the reader an emotion or a state of mind. Few explicit references to emotion were made by Huidobro before the Nord-Sud period. In the poem "Arte poética", he exclaimed: "Por qué cantáis la rosa, ¡oh Poetas! / Hacedla florecer en el poema" (OC, I, 255). Then in Manifestes, he emphasized the importance of the unifying emotion:

El conjunto de los diversos hechos nuevos unidos por un mismo espíritu es lo que constituye la obra creada.

Si no están unidos por un mismo espíritu, resultará una obra impura, informe, que sólo exalta a la fantasía sin ley. (OC, I, 693)

IV

Both Reverdy and Dermée were emphatic on the subject of careful organization and control in the creation of the work of art. Dermée proclaimed the arrival of "un âge classique" (NS, 1, 3) in which the time had come for the poet to dominate his object. He maintained that the poet had to subject himself to interior and exterior discipline (NS, 1, 4). The cubist painters had emphasized the idea of control, "maîtrise de soi-même", during the creative process (NS, 10, 3).

What were the constraints or limits to which the Nord-Sud group was willing to subject itself? Reverdy, in his essay "L'Émotion", said that the quality of the words chosen was of great importance (NS, 8, 5). In Self Défense, Reverdy explained his reason for choosing to deprive language of its traditional reference: "Un élément ne devient pur que dégagé du sentiment que lui confère sa situation dans la vie. Il faut le dépouiller de ce sentiment pour

que dans l'oeuvre il joue un rôle sans détriment pour son ensemble".⁴¹
 His reason for choosing a conspicuously austere style was intimately linked with his conception of poetry. By using bare nouns, stripped of superfluous adjectives, he deprived them of their traditional referential function and gave them a new reference determined by the rest of the poem. Such control in the finished work required of the poet "un travail austère, ... une tenue d'esprit sévère, ... beaucoup de sacrifices et de restrictions".⁴²

The search for le mot pur was one of the main concerns of the Parnassians. Théophile Gautier echoed the emphasis they placed on the persistent search for the exact expression in his famous poem "L'Art":

Sculpte, lime, cisèle;
 Que ton rêve flottant
 Se scelle
 Dans le bloc résistant!⁴³

Mallarmé shared the Parnassians' belief in the importance and effectiveness of a carefully selected language. He claimed that "l'oeuvre pure implique la disparition élocutoire du poète qui cède l'initiative aux mots".⁴⁴ Mallarmé thought that the first step was to study the secret properties of words in order to have full knowledge of their affinities. Only then could he combine the words to express the Idea. The sounds and associations, then, could act upon each other and on the reader's sensibility, and understanding would be in abeyance.

Max Jacob also believed that each word must be weighed many times in a poem before reaching the most perfect phrasing. Some of his poems became an exploration of the possibilities of words, such as "Avenue du Maine":

Les manèges déménagent
 Ménager manager
 De l'avenue du Maine
 Que ton manège mène
 Pour mener ton ménage!

Les manèges déménagent
 Ah!, vers quels mirages?
 Dites pour quels voyages
 Les manèges déménagent.⁴⁵

Jacob presented a few select words in as many variations as possible. The subject itself, the carrousels being moved from the avenue du Maine, is unimportant. In the preface to Le Cornet à dés, Jacob claimed that "le poème en prose est un bijou",⁴⁶ implying that the construction of each poem requires conciseness and discipline.

In his letter to Paul Demy, Rimbaud too is concerned with this aspect of creation:

La première étude de l'homme qui veut être poète est sa propre connaissance, entière; il cherche son âme, il l'inspecte, il la tente, l'apprend. ...
 Je dis qu'il faut être voyant, se faire voyant.
 Le Poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens.⁴⁷

This concern with the mental and spiritual state of the poet prior to creation forms a significant part of Huidobro's theoretical writings.

Early in his literary career, Huidobro became concerned with the mental state of the poet prior to creation. His book of prose poems Las pagodas ocultas explores this subject. However, later he began to realize that the poet not only must prepare himself spiritually and mentally before writing but that he must achieve and retain a state of excessive control while writing the poem as well: "La poesía ha de ser creada por el poeta, con toda la fuerza de sus sentidos más despiertos que nunca" (OC, I, 664). Huidobro maintained

that poetry could only result when the poet was in a state of super-consciousness:

La superconciencia se logra cuando nuestras facultades intelectuales adquieren una intensidad vibratoria superior, una longitud de onda, una calidad de onda, infinitamente más poderosa que de ordinario. En el poeta, este estado puede producirse, puede desencadenarse mediante algún hecho insignificante e invisible, a veces, para el propio poeta. (OC, I, 664)

Like Reverdy and Dermée, Huidobro believed that the poet should always be in full control of himself and his means, and opposed the surrealists who exalted the subconscious and who proclaimed the merits of automatic writing.

Inspired by Darío and the Modernists, Huidobro was concerned, even in his early works, with having great control over the language used in his poems. He opposed, in Pasando y pasando, the cliché and rhetorical poetry.⁴⁸ In "El espejo de agua" he counseled: "cuida tu palabra; / El adjetivo, cuando no da vida, mata" (OC, I, 255). This advice indicates that Huidobro was becoming increasingly conscious of the necessity of putting more control on language, so that only the most precise and effective words would be used. In a lecture he gave at the Atheneum of Madrid in 1921, he spoke in favor of the deep and latent referential value of words:

Aparte de la significación gramatical del lenguaje, hay otra, una significación mágica, que es la única que nos interesa. Uno es el lenguaje objetivo que sirve para nombrar las cosas del mundo sin sacarlas fuera de su calidad de inventario; el otro rompe esa norma convencional y en él las palabras pierden su representación estricta para adquirir otra más profunda y como rodeada de un aura luminosa que debe elevar al lector del plano habitual y envolverlo en una atmósfera encantada. (OC, I, 654)

Whereas Reverdy chose words designating simple, constant things so that their individual meanings would be sacrificed in favor of the total meaning or effect as did Mallarmé, Huidobro claimed that the poet should look for and use the internal or latent words hidden in the things of exterior reality. The difference lies in the fact that Reverdy depended on the final result to convey an inner reality, whereas Huidobro, in his theory, was concerned with discovering the individual words which would reveal it. In this respect, Huidobro is closer to the symbolists than to the Nord-Sud group.

V

According to the Nord-Sud theory, another technique essential in the creation of the work of art was the carefully planned mise-en-page. Reverdy conceived of the poem as an independent object, or poème-objet, and treated the borders of the page like the edges of a canvas, arranging the words as the cubist painters had carefully planned the location and shape of every object in a canvas. This typographical dispersion had a two-fold purpose: to replace traditional punctuation; and to give a visual dimension to the poem, presumably increasing the aesthetic pleasure of the reader. Reverdy deplored the poems of Apollinaire and the futurists which used this technique with the sole purpose of adding a visual dimension to poetry, but which merely made their poems more awkward to read. In Self Défense, he wrote: "D'autres pratiquaient des dispositions typographiques dont les formes plastiques introduisaient en littérature un élément étranger, apportant d'ailleurs une difficulté de lecture déplorable".⁴⁹ On the other hand, Reverdy admired Mallarmé's use of the technique in Un

coup de dés in which the typographical dispersion served to create the rhythm of the poem.

The first comment on the new punctuation was in the form of a note in the October 1917 issue. It maintained that punctuation had been invented for traditional works:

La ponctuation est un moyen infiniment utile pour guider le lecteur et rendre plus facile la lecture des oeuvres de forme ancienne et de composition compacte. Aujourd'hui chaque oeuvre porte, liées à sa forme spéciale, toutes les indications utiles à l'esprit du lecteur. (NS, 8, 2)

In his early poems, Reverdy replaced traditional punctuation by a simple logical system of going back to the line when punctuation was required. However, the typographical dispersion advocated in Nord-Sud was not only to indicate punctuation but form a new syntax. It was to become an integral part of the poem, helping to create the effect or emotion desired, with the spaces or "blancs" playing as important a role as the words themselves. This conception of punctuation and syntax was only another element necessary in creating a truly autonomous work according to the fully integrated system of the Nord-Sud aesthetics.

In addition to the liberation of poetry from stringent rules, such as was occurring in France with vers-librisme, liberties were being taken more frequently with the mise-en-page and with punctuation. The first significant change in modern poetry appeared in Mallarmé's poem Un coup de dés in which the dispersion on the page was designed to convey the rhythm. Mallarmé explained his purpose in the preface:

L'avantage... littéraire, de cette distance copiée mentalement sépare des groupes de mots ou les mots entre eux, semble d'accélérer tantôt et de ralentir le mouvement, le scandant, l'intimant même selon une vision simultanée de la Page: celle-ci prise pour unité comme l'est autre part le Vers ou ligne parfaite.⁵⁰

When Alcools was published in 1913, the critics were shocked at the absence of all punctuation.⁵¹ It has been suggested that Apollinaire deleted all punctuation from the poems in Alcools after having read the futurist manifesto of 1912 which advocated the elimination of all punctuation as well as all rules. In Calligrammes, Apollinaire wished to give to his poems a new dimension, heretofore characteristic of painting only -- the visual dimension. The poems "Coeur couronne et miroir" and "La Cravate et la montre" are similar in form and content to a cubist still-life. In the poem "Lettre-océan", he used a more complex organization: the poet looks down from the Eiffel Tower ("Haute de 300 mètres"); circling it are the sounds of the "sirènes", the buses, the gramophones, the new shoes of the poet; radiating from this circle are brief comments on the streets leading to all parts of Paris.⁵²

Pierre Reverdy avoided the facile visual poems of Apollinaire and favored a more logical, effective mise-en-page. His early poems do not observe any rules of versification. The swift, transcendental insights into existence seem to be jotted down as they came to him. The verse is determined semantically, as in the poem "Rides du temps":

Le toit se soulève
Il fait chaud
Le soleil est un aimant
Qui nous soutient

À des kilomètres

J'aime le bruit que tu fais
 Avec tes pieds
 On m'a dit que tu cours
 Mais tu n'arriveras jamais⁵³

However, Reverdy did not use in his early poetry the more complex mise-en-page announced in the pages of Nord-Sud.

Huidobro never wrote on this aspect of the Nord-Sud aesthetics. However, his poems written prior to 1917 attest to an untiring search for a liberated verse. In Pasando y pasando, Huidobro had expressed his admiration for vers-librisme which had been emerging in France since the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ His long poem Adán is written in vers-libre.

The five principles of the Nord-Sud aesthetics discussed in this chapter form an integral system for creating a work of art. They deal primarily with techniques. Huidobro's theoretical writings are concerned mainly with the creative process itself; that is, the state of the poet prior to and while he is creating. Nevertheless, for all five principles of the Nord-Sud aesthetics, Huidobro had either arrived at or was moving towards a similar theory.

Apologists for the originality of Huidobro's theory of creationism appear not to have considered very seriously the historical evolution of certain aspects of his theory. Huidobro began searching for a new poetry at the age of eighteen. His early works show that he delved avidly in the works of nineteenth century poets such as Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Gustave Kahn and that he was an admirer of Rubén Darío in whose poetry many of the poetic concepts of the Parnassians and symbolists were assimilated. An aesthetic encounter was possible between Huidobro and the Nord-Sud group due to

the emergence of certain elements of their theories since approximately the middle of the nineteenth century and to the diffusion of these elements in Spanish America through the works of the Modernists.

FOOTNOTES

¹ I did not have access to the original French version of Manifestes. All quotations from this work are in Spanish as translated in Obras completas de Vicente Huidobro, I (Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1963), 654-700.

² Self Défense: critique et esthétique (Paris: Imprimerie Littéraire, 1919).

³ L'Esprit Nouveau, 6 (1921), 667-674.

⁴ Ibid., p. 671.

⁵ "Nord-Sud: 1917-1918", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1966, p. 72.

⁶ Michel Manoll, "Pierre Reverdy ou l'impalpable réalité", in Pierre Reverdy, ed. Jean Rousselot (Paris: Seghers, 1951), p. 62.

⁷ Mademoiselle de Maupin (Paris: Garnier, 1955), p. 37.

⁸ Curiosités esthétiques, L'Art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques (Paris: Garnier, 1962), p. 635.

⁹ Guillaume Apollinaire, Les Peintres cubistes: méditations esthétiques, 10th ed. (Paris: "Athéna", 1950), p. 11.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

¹¹ (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 23.

¹² Ibid., p. 135.

¹³ Poesía, V, in Obras completas (Madrid: Ediciones Castilla, 1953), p. 856.

¹⁴ See Chapter I, pp. 19-20.

¹⁵ Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 11.

- 16 Ibid., p. 30.
- 17 Ibid., p. 27.
- 18 Oeuvres (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 233.
- 19 Robert W. Greene, The poetic theory of Pierre Reverdy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 16.
- 20 Oeuvres poétiques (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), p. 39.
- 21 Ibid., p. 44.
- 22 Plupart du temps: poèmes, 1915-1922, 4th ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 139.
- 23 Ibid., p. 51.
- 24 (1875-1910). The two works in which he most effectively used the image to which I refer here are Los éxtasis de la montaña (1904) and Los parques abandonados (1908).
- 25 Poesías completas y páginas en prosa (Madrid: Aguilar, 1961), p. 113.
- 26 Ibid., p. 399.
- 27 (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Chile, 1914), p. 30.
- 28 Oeuvres complètes, p. 11.
- 29 Ibid., p. 70.
- 30 Stéphane Mallarmé, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 455-477.
- 31 Rémy de Gourmont, Le Problème du style, 11th ed. (Paris: Mercure de France, [1926]), p. 40.
- 32 Oeuvres poétiques, p. 42.
- 33 Ibid., p. 180.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 167.

³⁵ Although Calligrammes was published in 1918, I am discussing the poems included in this book as representative of works published prior to the beginning of Nord-Sud because most of the poems appeared in various reviews between 1912 and 1918.

³⁶ Self Défense, pp. [25-26].

³⁷ Plupart du temps, p. 63.

³⁸ Obras completas, V, p. 774.

³⁹ Ventura García Calderón, "Rubén Darío", Mercure de France, CXIV (1916), p. 391.

⁴⁰ (1896 -). His first books were Junto al brasero (1914), La mirada inmóvil (1919) and Chopin (1919).

⁴¹ p. [25].

⁴² Ibid., p. [6].

⁴³ Émaux et camées (Paris: G. Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1892), p. 226.

⁴⁴ Divagations (Paris: G. Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1896), p. 246.

⁴⁵ Max Jacob, ed. André Billy (Paris: Seghers, 1946), pp. 88-89.

⁴⁶ (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 23.

⁴⁷ Oeuvres, p. 346.

⁴⁸ See chapter I, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁹ pp. [27-28].

⁵⁰ Oeuvres complètes, p. 455.

⁵¹ All the poems included in Alcools had been published previously, with traditional punctuation, in various literary reviews.

⁵² Apollinaire, Oeuvres poétiques, pp. 183-185.

⁵³ Pierre Reverdy, Plupart du temps, p. 97.

⁵⁴ pp. 183-185.

CHAPTER III

THE POETRY OF VICENTE HUIDOBRO, PIERRE REVERDY,

PAUL DERMÉE, MAX JACOB AND GUILLAUME

APOLLINAIRE IN NORD-SUD

As I have demonstrated in Chapter II, the aesthetics of Nord-Sud had been explicitly formulated in several important essays. The present chapter will study the application of this aesthetics, which constitutes the Nord-Sud style, in the poetry published in that review by Vicente Huidobro, Pierre Reverdy, Paul Dermée, Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire¹ through an examination of the degree to which their poems conform to four of the five principles described in the previous chapter.² This chapter will also attempt to indicate the changes effected in Huidobro's poetry due to his exposure to the new literary currents in France and to his personal relationships with many of its avant-garde painters and poets. Did this period help him to further develop and apply his pre-1917 theories of creationism?

The few critics who studied poems from Nord-Sud did so with the sole purpose of determining whether it was Reverdy or Huidobro who introduced creationist techniques to the review. Such a decision, which thus far has been impossible to reach objectively, would not increase our appreciation of the works of either poet. It is the contention of this thesis that the poems published by Huidobro in Nord-Sud are an important part of a poetic evolution; they are of special interest because they form a bridge between his poetry published be-

fore and after his contribution to the review.

I

If the Nord-Sud poetry was to conform to the review's aesthetics, it had to reject the anecdote and all that which sought to imitate life or interpret it. To what extent did the five poets in question apply this principle to their poetry?

In most of Huidobro's poems published in the review, the état d'âme of the poet is projected in a landscape or the interior of a room of which the following poem, which was briefly discussed in Chapter I, "La Chambre déserte...", is a typical example:

La chambre déserte
On sent s'en aller la lumière
Les ombres sortent de sous les meubles
Au loin les objets qu'on a perdus
Se rient
La nuit
La chambre s'inonde
Un cri
Plein d'angoisse

Personne ne m'a répondu
(NS, 3, 10)

This poem does not describe the feelings of the poet, but recreates the original feelings by projecting the poet's emotion in exterior reality. As a result, the reader can experience rather than try to understand the alienation felt by the poet. Huidobro conveyed this alienation by provoking a feeling of solitude which gradually increases in intensity: the person, presumably the poet, is alone ("La chambre déserte") and the menacing darkness of night is approaching ("On sent s'en aller la lumière"); gradually the room is being invaded ("Les ombres sortent de sous les meubles"); an unde-

finer sense of loss and the undesired passage of time overwhelm the poet ("Au loin les objets qu'on a perdus / Se rient"). The tension thus created reaches its apex when the room becomes flooded by that menacing force -- night. The anguished cry then released does not break the tension but serves to increase the feeling of solitude and alienation present in the last line ("Personne ne m'a répondu"). The initial feeling of solitude increased to a fear of the passage of time and of the absolute solitude of man facing death.

The theme of this poem is not new; Huidobro used it frequently in his early poems, notably those of La gruta del silencio. But the manner in which the theme is conveyed has changed. Instead of stating explicitly what he was feeling, Huidobro chose to project these feelings in a situation and allow the situation to react on the reader. Among Huidobro's early poetic concerns, one of the most prominent was his rejection of rhetoric and explicitness, an ambition which has been realized in the subtle and intrinsic poem discussed above. Furthermore, Huidobro's obsessive desire to create is being realized. The immediacy of the poem creates the illusion that Huidobro was, at the time of writing, experiencing anguish. In actual fact, Huidobro created the situation designed to provoke a certain emotion. The poem "La Chambre déserte..." does not imitate or interpret life; it is life.

Pierre Reverdy had been using this technique, even at the beginning of his writing career.³ His first poem in Nord-Sud, "La Neige tombe...", is an appropriate example:

La neige tombe
 Et le ciel gris
 Sur ma tête où le toit est pris
 La nuit.
 Où ira l'ombre qui me suit
 A qui est-elle?
 Une étoile où (sic) une hirondelle
 Au coin de la fenêtre
 La lune
 Et une femme brune.
 C'est là
 Quelqu'un passe et ne me voit pas.
 Je regarde tourner la grille
 Et le feu presque éteint qui brille
 Pour moi seul
 Mais là où je m'en vais il fait un froid mortel
 (NS, 1, 11)

Like Huidobro, Reverdy did not describe or relate, but evoked an aura of inquiétude which, when magnified by an impalpable presence, converts it to a feeling of alienation from mankind. This emotion is created by the description, or at times merely the naming of isolated instances or objects which are carefully combined to produce the effect desired. Frequently, by eliminating the verb, Reverdy deliberately neglected to make an overt association between the substantives. This allows the reader to make the association himself. The dreary landscape reflects the poet's despair and solitude. The roof stuck on his head further accentuates a solitude, a fundamental division between human beings, a division which is permanent and irreparable and which weighs heavily on his soul. In this poem, the landscape which also represents the exterior world, populated by "l'ombre" and "quelqu'un", is unfriendly and menacing, whereas, the interior of a room represents a certain warmth and security. As is so characteristic of so many of Reverdy's poems, the last line is unsettling, even despairing: "Mais là où je m'en vais il fait un froid mortel".

There are no anecdotes, no rhetoric. The seemingly disjointed lines of the poem are dependent on each other for the total meaning.

Paul Dermée reached the extreme of this technique in his later Nord-Sud poems. A few disparate objects are named as in the poem "As de pique...":

As de pique
 ce verre
 la cendre de la pipe

 Bougie éteinte plantée sur mes amours

 Matin pluvieux

 et cet ennui qui pèse

 Le jeu de cartes où rêve l'avenir
 (NS, 11, 5)

Dermée succeeded in conveying, in this seemingly incoherent poem, the sadness resulting from a lost love and "le jeu du hasard" which is part of life ("As de pique", "Le jeu de cartes"). Sadness, solitude and boredom are implied by the glass, the ashes from the pipe, the extinguished candle and the rainy morning. The only description of feelings contained in this poem is the very baudelairian line, "Et cet ennui qui pèse". Dermée also wrote semi-anecdotal poems in the style of Apollinaire: "Festin" (NS, 2, 10), and self-sufficient poems in the vein of Jacob: "Poème en prose" (NS, 2, 8).

Not all the Nord-Sud poems are without a subject. Huidobro's poem "Tour Eiffel" has as subject what has become the most banal symbol of Paris. However, consistent with his other poems in the review, he did not explicitly describe the Eiffel Tower during the war, but rather suggested what it represented:

Tour Eiffel
 Guitare du ciel

Ta télégraphie sans fil
 Attire les mots
 Comme un rosier les abeilles

Pendant la nuit
 La Seine ne coule plus

Tour Eiffel
 Ruche des mots
 Encrier de miel

Araignée aux pattes en fil de fer
 Qui fait sa toile de nuages

Mon petit garçon
 Pour monter à la Tour Eiffel
 On monte sur une chanson

Do
 ré
 mi
 fa
 sol
 la
 si
 do

Nous sommes en haut
 Télégraphie sans fil
 Vent électrique
 La Seine dort sous l'ombre de ses ponts

Les paroles et les abeilles
 Vont dans l'air
 Par un chemin
 De parfum

Tour Eiffel
 Boîte prodigieuse
 Sonnerie de Paris
 Affiche de France

Le jour de la Victoire
 Tu la crieras aux étoiles
 (NS, 6-7, 24-25)

This is a descriptive poem in the manner of Delaunay's simultaneist paintings of the Eiffel Tower. Its many aspects are revealed through a series of cinematic metaphors. The tower is simultaneously a guitar,

a rose-bush, a word-hive, a honey-well, a spider, a large box, the announcer of Paris, a poster of France, and finally the mediator between the earth and the infinite. Basically, it is the reader who must unite the various facets of the Eiffel Tower. In this respect, this poem still observes the first principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics.

Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire, contrary to Huidobro and Reverdy, could not reject all anecdote and description. However, in Jacob's poetry they assume a secondary role, as in the poem "On a fait des reprises...":

On a fait des reprises dans l'azur de mon ciel
 Deux lions s'accroupissaient à mes épithalames
 et Sainte Catherine a relevé sa lame
 pour tailler les buissons tressés couleur de miel.
 Les deux châteaux pointus bourrelés de tourelles
 la tourelle au château avait des écrouelles
 c'est tout ce qui restait dans cette capitale
 et des bouts de jardins dispersés çà et là.
 Et nous voyions aussi vos coiffes de dentelles
 Madame Adamensaur
 Couleur de hareng saur
 Madame Mirabeau, Madame Mirabelle
 Nabuchodonosore, mère du roi, dit-elle.
 Les voiliers revenaient vers cette cathédrale:
 L'un avait des trésors et l'autre du coaltar
 Le troisième prit feu qui portait Abélard
 et la mer avait quelque chose de végétal.
 Et moi j'écris ceci en lettres capitales.
 Je ne serai jamais qu'un écolier dans l'art
 Collier des écoliers, nous portons des couronnes
 Celui qui les reçoit vaut celui qui les donne.

(NS, 4-5, 19)

The laconic style of Huidobro and Reverdy is absent from this poem. Jacob's style is journalistic, "populaire", a factor which contributes to the deceptively logical sequence of fantastic

images. In the first part of the poem, objects which usually possess positive characteristics ("épithalames", "Sainte Catherine", "château", and "jardins") react violently or assume negative associations. Jacob seems to group the fictitious ladies with these negative visions. The bleak atmosphere is partially dispersed by the last four lines. Jacob becomes like a playful schoolboy.

Much attention has been given to alliteration in this poem. It is especially noticeable in these four lines:

Madame Adamensaur
Couleur de hareng saur
Madame Mirabeau, Madame Mirabelle
Nabuchodonosure, mère du roi, dit-elle.

The intermingled sounds [m], [a], [o] and [saur] create a playful atmosphere which intrudes on a series of bleak images. The absence of tangible transitions and logical development serves to strengthen the aura of otherworldliness and fantasy. The various elements in the poem are merely tools which, by creating a peculiar angle of vision, serve to convey this feeling. Marcel Raymond in writing about Jacob and Apollinaire in general, explained it as follows:

Un poète à ce point détaché, en face d'un univers dont les détails et les accidents sont pareillement dépourvus de valeur, se doit d'accueillir indistinctement ce que lui apportent ses sensations, son imagination, ou ses rêves. Un réalisme évident ... caractérise cette nouvelle poésie fantaisiste. Tout lui est bon, ... et tout se mêle en elle, comme aux étalages des bazars et aux pages de réclame des journaux.⁴

It is the angle of vision which provides the unity, not the description. The events lose their importance, become insignificant, before the experience they provide.

The poetry of Guillaume Apollinaire is much more marginal with respect to this first principle. He had been, and was at the beginning of the review,⁵ greatly admired by the other poets for having liberated poetry, thus clearing the way for "literary cubism". Most of Apollinaire's poems published in Nord-Sud are based on his personal experiences: some on the war; others, as in the case of the poem "La Victoire", on the future of poetry. This long poem appeared in the first number of the review and acclaims a dual victory: for France in the war, and, as is fitting for the first poem of a review whose aim is to revolutionize poetry, for a new poetic language:

Regarde
 La victoire avant tout sera
 De bien voir au loin
 Et de tout voir
 De près
 Et que tout
 Ait un nom nouveau
 (NS, 1, 10)

Also, like Jacob, Apollinaire used variations of a word, as in the poem "Avant le cinéma", in order to explore its possibilities or merely for the pleasure of using its different forms. The poems which observe to a certain degree the first principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics are "Départ" and "Fusée-signal". The latter poem will be discussed here and is reproduced below:

Des villages flambaient dans la nuit intérieure
 Une fermière conduit son auto sur une route vers Galveston

 Qui a lancé cette fusée-signal

 Néanmoins tu feras bien de tenir la porte ouverte
 Et puis le vent scieur de long

a progression in which the two elements, which make up the poem, are presented separately. At the end of the poem, they have merged and have become one.

A poem which assumes an independent existence according to the Nord-Sud aesthetics does not imitate or interpret life.

Although the poet may use in his poems elements from reality, he must reshape and reorder them so that they have virtually no meaning outside the poem. As we saw earlier, this principle applies to Huidobro's poem "La Chambre déserte..." but not to his poem "Tour Eiffel".⁶ Let us study the poem "Ton cri perça..." by Huidobro to illustrate this point:

Ton cri perça le plafond
Et la pluie sur ton visage
Le délaye dans l'ombre

Où vas-tu

Le chemin de la glace
Est long à parcourir
Et les cheminées font l'adieu des mouchoirs

Elle s'est noyée dans le miroir
Les saules de la rive

méditent
(NS, 9, 9)

Superficially, the poem depicts the departure of someone, presumably a young woman loved by the poet. The first line immediately announces a crisis. The woman's cry not only serves to express her anguish or despair but it also permits the rain to conceal her face and, therefore, help his memory of her to fade. She makes her escape through the mirror. The sadness provoked by her departure is not explicitly stated but is created by an accumulation of images: rain carries associations of parting and sadness; chimneys wave their

farewells; willows convey the idea of weeping. Basically, this poem is an autonomous poem: there are no spatial or temporal limits; the characters remain anonymous; the event is secondary to the emotion provoked, which progressed from a sharp cry to meditation. The words lose their connotations and must depend on the poem in its entirety for their meaning.

Most of Pierre Reverdy's poems are independent, self-sufficient entities which are not a reflection of the visible world, but the creation of an inner world. Although the elements used are identifiable ("la neige", "le ciel", "le toit", "la nuit", "l'ombre", "une étoile", "Une hirondelle", "la fenêtre", "la lune", "une femme", "le feu"), they lose their concrete significance and acquire, through their association with each other, a new meaning which is impossible outside the whole. The inner world evoked makes no reference outside the poem: the poet is faceless; the situation is timeless and spaceless.

However, as Sarah Frances Jacob has observed, Reverdy used a symbolic system which can diminish the effect of the entire poem because the uninitiated reader has not grasped the total significance of the symbols:

Throughout his poetry Pierre Reverdy uses certain images so frequently that he turns them into symbols by force of repetition. ... upon occasion he is disposed to assign particular values to particular objects in his poetic reality. Consequently, he evolves an approximate code of reserved meanings which, though far from hermetic in the style of a Mallarmé or a Valéry, are nevertheless closed to the casual reader without a key. ... we must bear in mind that the symbolism is often multivalent,

sometimes indeterminate, and almost always left to the interpretation of the reader.⁷

A number of words or ideas recur to convey the message of the poet's tormented soul. These are "le mur", a mysterious presence, the dual self, "la maison", "le voyage". They assume, within the context of the poem, existential implications. The wall may symbolize an obstruction to self-introspection as in the poem "Quelque temps passé...": "On rentre du même côté mais il y a une barrière" (NS, 2, 8). In the poem "Rien", the poet hopes that the barrier and the threat of the néant will be removed and that he will reach transcendence:

On ne voit plus glisser que l'ombre dans la nuit
Et le mur s'éloigner du trottoir où je suis

Le vide se ferait
Il n'y aurait plus de terre
(NS, 11, [7])

The most disturbing element in his poems is the impalpable presence of a mysterious being. At times, this being, by its mere proximity and anonymity, accentuates the poet's solitude and separation from humanity, as in the poems "La Neige tombe...": "Quelqu'un passe et ne me voit pas" (NS, 1, 11); "Quelque temps passé...": "Un homme passe derrière la haie", "Quelqu'un a peur" (NS, 2, 8); and "Matin": "Quelqu'un s'en va" (NS, 3, 11). In other instances, it is not an invisible person, but an anonymous appendage of a human body which conveys a premonition of disaster, as in the poems "Galleries": "Tout près / La main lentement se soulève" (NS, 10, 14); and "Espace": "La main / tient la nuit / par un fil" (NS, 15, [2]). In addition to accentuating his solitude in the world and in his con-

frontation with death, the mysterious presence at times appears to have the power to precipitate the end which he fears so acutely.

In almost every poem by Reverdy, a mysterious shadow follows the poet. This shadow can symbolize the poet's own disintegration into two or more separate and wilful individuals: "Un homme / Et je suis celui-là / sur le mur" (NS, 4-5, 8), "Où ira l'ombre qui me suit" (NS, 1, 11), and "Une ombre plus grande que lui-même fait le tour de la Terre / Et moi je suis resté assis sans oser regarder" (NS, 2, 8). The word "house" or any of its parts are used as a symbol of social severance as in the following: "La porte tranche le mot / le corps" (NS, 4-5, 8), "Et le dernier rayon qui passe / ferme la nuit / La porte / Le livre / Minuit" (NS, 6-7, 22). They may also symbolize personal solitude: "Toutes les portes sont fermées / Derrière quelqu'un écoute plaqué contre le mur" (NS, 10, 13), "La porte est fermée / Tout est noir" (NS, 14, [4]).

All these symbols are related to the symbol of the voyage which, according to S. F. Jacob, represents the "despairing quest of an abandoned race that hunts a path to the final perpetuation of the individual".⁸ Each poem represents, in fact, the poet wandering, with no fixed destination, seeking, alone, the solution to his torment caused by an existential anguish. Can a poem which uses symbols be considered an autonomous poem? In the case of Reverdy's poems, I believe that they are self-sufficient since he has created not only his own symbols but his own private world which exists only in the poem.

Paul Dermée's poems published in Nord-Sud are not as

uniform in style as those of Reverdy and Huidobro. His first poem published in the review, "Festin", proclaims the evils of war by means of clear, unadorned statements:

Et ce carnage se poursuit depuis cent jours.
 J'ai mis ma main dans toutes les blessures
 Il y a tant de morts que j'en ai oublié le nombre.
 Toutes les infirmières sont tombées à la peine
 Et il n'y a pas assez de bois au monde
 Pour leur faire à tous des bières.
 (NS, 2, 10)

whereas the poem, "En cinquième ligne", conveys, through some of Dermée's best imagery, the cruel realities of war:

La mort arrive conduisant son auto saoule
 Au bord des sources
 les étoiles se sont ternies
 La destinée aux doigts ogivés
 Nous saisira là où nous sommes
 Tes cils offusquent tes yeux d'aciers.
 (NS, 4-5, 14)

It was not until the eighth number of the review that Dermée published a truly autonomous poem (NS, 8, 11). A later poem, "Ces pommes...", published in the twelfth issue, is one of his best illustrating this aspect:

Ces pommes
 et la blancheur du compotier
 La pointe du couteau a fait une blessure
 Ton linge soulevé
 le sein paraît
 La lune
 Des lèvres
 Mon désir nocturne se ranime
 (NS, 12, 8)

Associations can be made between the various elements without referring to anything outside the poem. Although the elements are concrete ("pommes", "compotier", "couteau", "linge", "sein", "lune" and "lèvres"), they are not valued for themselves but for a

particular quality which contributes to creating the total effect. In this poem, one of the unifying elements is the contrast between the colours red ("pommes", "une blessure" and "lèvres") and white ("la blancheur du compotier", "linge", "sein" and "la lune"). There is a progression in the poem towards the direct statement of the final verse. Dermée had written in the first number of Nord-Sud, "Le but du poète est de créer une oeuvre qui vive, en dehors de lui, de sa vie propre, qui soit située dans un ciel spécial, comme une île sur l'horizon" (NS, 1, 4), but he did not apply this principle until many issues later.

In the preface to Le Cornet à dés, Jacob stated that "une oeuvre d'art vaut par elle-même et non par les confrontations qu'on en peut faire avec la réalité".⁹ Although he discouraged interpretations using elements exterior to the poem, Jacob did not state that he eliminated all temptation for the reader to make associations, just as he did not completely eliminate the anecdote even though he did not attribute much importance to it. In his poem "De quelques invitations", Jacob used an anecdotal tone to link phrases which are linked only by their sound. The result is the creation of an ethereal situation:

Mon confrère Malfilâtre,
vers divers jeux de loto
dis-moi pourquoi tu fuis l'âtre
puisqu'on te guette au ghetto.

Il paraît qu'au téléphone
on n'entend plus que mon nom!
Je voudrais qu'il fût aphone,
s'en servît Agamemnon!

Plaise à celui qu'Antipode
 invite dans ses festins
 dire ce mot "lycopode"
 pour conjurer le destin!

N'étaçons, ô mes chaussures,
 nos talents dans les salons!
 je n'ai pas plus de voitures
 que vous n'avez de talons.

Brandis fort au belvédère
 ton instrument opticien!
 c'est pour fuir par derrière
 le message quotidien.

Et si dans une gouttière
 le moineau se trouvait pris,
 agrafez la jarretière
 ce qui signifie mépris.

Quoi! le diable est sous la nappe
 et mon coeur est le marteau
 dont il se sert quand il frappe
 pour me séparer de l'eau.

(NS, 6-7, 18)

Perhaps the title is a clue. The reader is invited into a fantasy world created on the basis of alliteration and internal rhyme. The stanzas are as diverse and unrelated as the verses themselves. Mythological (Agamemnon) and historical (Malfilâtre) characters not only do not elucidate the poem, but their extra-literary significance is totally irrelevant. As a result the reader is confronted with a different approach to creating an independent poem. He must allow himself to be seduced, indeed to gravitate, into a fantasy world by the sheer force of alliteration.

Most of the poems published by Apollinaire in Nord-Sud refer to people, events or situations outside the poem. It is possible, however, to consider such poems as "Fusée-signal"¹⁰ and "Départ" as autonomous poems. The latter poem will be discussed here:

Et leurs visages étaient pâles
 Et leurs sanglots s'étaient brisés

Après la neige aux purs pétales
 Comme ses mains sur tes baisers
 Tombaient les feuilles automnales
 (NS, 8, 11)

It is not necessary for the reader to be aware that Apollinaire wrote this poem at the front where he saw so many men die in their youth, nor to know that "tes baisers" refers to Madeleine Pagès to whom the poem was sent in 1915. The few adept strokes evoke a deep sadness that men must die. Although a descriptive style is used, the emotion takes precedence over the situation. The lyrical, dionysiacal characteristic of most poems published by Apollinaire in the review conform with difficulty and only marginally with the first principle discussed here.

Not all the poems published in Nord-Sud by the five poets in question conformed to the first principle of its aesthetics. A greater lack of conformity was found in the poetry of those who had already established their own individual style before the review was founded; that is, the two oldest poets, Apollinaire and Jacob. Reverdy and Huidobro had maintained earlier that anecdote had no place in art. Reverdy had succeeded in eliminating it from his very first poems, but Huidobro had merely made it an important part of his theory. The poems which he published in Nord-Sud were probably the first definite application of this theory.

II

One of the principle components of a poem according to the

Nord-Sud aesthetics is the image. What was its role and structure in the poems of the five poets in question? In his important essay "L'image", Reverdy clearly stated the role he assigned to the image:

Elle ne peut naître d'une comparaison mais du rapprochement de deux réalités plus ou moins éloignées.

Plus les rapports des deux réalités rapprochées seront lointains et justes, plus l'image sera forte -- plus elle aura de puissance émotive et de réalité poétique. (NS, 13, [3])

Various methods were used in the poems published in the review to create an image composed of disparate elements.

Firstly, some poets used the familiar technique of personification. Both Huidobro and Reverdy used it to give human characteristics to inanimate objects as in the following examples: "UN TONNERRE FATIGUÉ" (NS, 6-7, 26) and "Rayon emprisonné" (NS, 3, 12). The adjective attributes to the noun a quality which is unusual. A much more common technique used in the poetry of Huidobro, Reverdy and Dermée is that of assigning to an inanimate object a verbal element which describes human activities. Examples are numerous in Huidobro's "L'Homme triste": "Les choses s'ennuient / Dans la chambre", "le jardin se meurt", "les feuilles pleurent", and "L'Horizon parle" (NS, 1, 9). Others include: "L'obscurité me mord la tête", "Le chien boîteux ... / Pleure" (NS, 6-7, 26), "Et ton souvenir chante dans ma montre" (NS, 8, 13), "Les saules de la rive / méditent" (NS, 9, 9), and "Une cloche oubliée / Pleure dans l'obscurité" (NS, 10, 8). These images are not very different from Julio Herrera y Reissig's pantheistic images which conveyed emotions in a manner similar to the romantics. Better examples are found in Reverdy's poetry -- they are much more audacious and interesting: "La porte tranche le mot"

(NS, 4-5, 8), "Une branche s'incline sur l'oeil qui dort", and "L'eau s'étire" (NS, 6-7, 23). Whereas the images created by Huidobro, listed above, try to convey an emotion in each image, those of Reverdy remain only a part of the emotion resulting from the poem. Some of the most interesting examples are found in Dermée's poems: "La mort boite", "Les arbres s'étirent au soleil" (NS, 4-5, 14), "Mon souvenir autour de la maison / rôde", "Le radiateur halète / dans l'ombre", "Mes chaussures fument" (NS, 9, 13), and "L'orgueil frissonne au souffle du matin" (NS, 10, 11). These images and metaphors may be said to be autonomous since they are not figurative representations of objects or events existing in the physical world, but in the conceptual world.

Secondly, the poet may create an image in which things, animals, human beings, or abstract concepts act according to strange, unworldly laws, as in the following examples from the poems of Huidobro: "Je m'attends derrière la glace" (NS, 4-5, 21), "L'obscurité me mord la tête", "Les girafes veulent avaler la lune" (NS, 6-7, 26), "Ta tête pend de la fumée de ton cigare" (NS, 8, 13), "Elle s'est noyée dans le miroir" (NS, 9, 9), and "Et une cloche imperceptible / Me parle à l'oreille" (10, 8). Many interesting examples can be found in Reverdy's poems: "La fenêtre fait une grimace" (NS, 2, 7), "La pluie efface les larmes" (NS, 2, 8), "Et le dernier rayon qui passe / ferme la nuit" (NS, 6-7, 22), "Le ciel était tombé à quelques pas / Parmi les pierres" (NS, 8, 7), "Les murs se sont mis à sourire" (NS, 10, 15), "La main tient la nuit par un fil" (NS, 15, [2]), and "Des gouttes de sang claquent sur le mur / Et le vent du soir / sort d'une poitrine" (NS, 15, [2]); in Dermée's poems: "La

mort arrive conduisant son auto saoule", "Le gazon est jonché d'éclats de rire" (NS, 4-5, 14), "Le miel coule par toutes mes blessures" (NS, 6-7, 6), "L'orgueil frissonne au souffle du matin", and "Autour de moi l'ombre s'effeuille" (NS, 10, 11); and in Apollinaire's poems: "La rue où nagent mes deux mains" (NS, 1, 10), "Les avions pondent des oeufs" (NS, 12, 5), and "Nos coeurs pendent ensemble au même grenadier" (NS, 12, 6).

Thirdly, the poets at times use similes or a metaphor in which the objects or situations compared have few, if any, logical relationships, enabling them to transform the sensory world into their own created universe.¹¹ There are such similes in the poems of Huidobro but not in those of Reverdy and Jacob. Here are several examples from Huidobro's poems: "Les heures glissent / Comme des gouttes d'eau sur une vitre" (NS, 4-5, 20), "Un mot doucement reste comme un oiseau / Sur les lèvres" (NS, 4-5, 8), "Araignées aux pattes en fil de fer / Qui fait sa toile de nuages" (NS, 6-7, 24). The following interesting simile occurs in one of Apollinaire's poems: "Deux lampes brûlent devant moi / Comme deux femmes qui rient" (NS, 1, 9). The similes used by Dermée have a recognizable relationship as in the following examples: "Mes jambes frémissent comme des violons" (NS, 4-5, 12), and "Tombe / en silence / comme une orange trop mûre" (NS, 4-5, 13).

Fourthly, most of the poets being discussed chose to juxtapose, without transition, substantives and allowed the friction generated to create a mood. Huidobro's poem "La Glace" uses this technique to advantage:

Ma face
 Et autour un peu d'eau.
 La glace,
 Une porte ouverte
 Qui montre une chambre pareille
 Singe!
 (NS, 4-5, 21)

The two images created refer to the symbols of the dual self and of introspection. In the poem "Tour Eiffel",¹² the same technique is used almost throughout. The tower becomes a number of unrelated things, depending on the point of view of the poet at a given time. The third and fourth images, the tower as a bee-hive of words and an ink-pot of honey, have become familiar to us. The Eiffel Tower is seen as a source of inspiration to the poet. The manner in which Huidobro arrived at these two images may be considered a preliminary step to the phoneme exchanges in Altazor:

Ruche des mots
 Encrier de miel

It is in the poetry of Reverdy and Dermée that the technique of juxtaposing without transition becomes predominant. In many instances, Reverdy's images appear to be too logical, perhaps in keeping with his conception of "l'image juste". In the poem "L'Ombre", in which the poet suddenly splits into two selves, the image conveys this duality: "La porte tranche le mot / le corps" (NS, 4-5, 8). Also, the juxtaposition, in the same poem, of "Une lueur" and "Une perle au bout des doigts" may logically be construed as a vision or an inspiration, slightly out of reach, or perhaps the intangible answer to Reverdy's perpetual query on existence. Another fairly simple image is used in "Galleries":

L'aube
 Le soleil naissant
 Une boule à peine ronde
 Le reflet du monde
 Sur l'écran
 (NS, 10, 13)

The rising sun creates a shadow of the world on a screen when it rises behind a barely round ball. This image may be a way in which Reverdy could come to grips with the immensity of the universe; that is, reducing it to concrete terms whereby he could understand more easily its mysteries. At the end of the poem "Dernière heure", this complex image, composed of four substantives following each other without transition, suggests the movement of the self to an interior, closed world:

Et le dernier rayon qui passe
 ferme la nuit
 La porte
 Le livre
 Minuit
 (NS, 6-7, 22)

The typographical dispersion has another reason in this poem than mere visual effect. The visual spaces, the pauses thus established and the visual descent strengthen and accentuate the descent into the self. Each noun used progressively narrows and limits, ending with "Minuit", the hour of contemplation and introspection.

It is, however, in Dermée's later poems published in Nord-Sud, as seen briefly in the study of "As de pique..." and "Ces pommes...",¹³ that the image, totally without transition, comes into its own. In some of the examples, the objects brought together have a common characteristic: in "Soleil / ma tête bourdonne" (NS, 8, 11), the shape of the head and the sun are similar; in "Ces yeux /

cailloux sous les roues des charettes" (NS, 10, 11), the three substantives all have a round shape. At other times, it is the spiritual similarity of these objects which links them: in "Rose blanche / ton rire / l'ombrelle verte" (NS, 8, 11), the three elements enumerated represent delicate and fragile things; in "L'automne / choses mortes / un oiseau crie / Le vent fuit" (NS, 9, 12), the verses are linked by "SILENCE" written vertically at the side of the page.

Few examples of this technique can be found in the poems of Jacob and Apollinaire. A few rare, but priceless images, are present in Jacob's poems: "Le danseur -- un zeste de citron" (NS, 8, 8). Its complete lack of logic merely serves to accentuate its charm. Some very beautiful and suggestive images are created by Apollinaire, as these examples demonstrate: in "mon lit ma lampe et mon casque troué" (NS, 1, 8), the material possessions of the poet, merely by being enumerated, accentuate his selfless needs. The central image of his poem "Fusée-signal" has been hailed as admirable and "étonnante":¹⁴

Ta langue
Le poisson rouge dans le bocal
De ta voix
(NS, 2, 6)

The juxtaposition of "langue" and "poisson rouge" forms an implicit comparison. As the fish is a prisoner in the glass jar, so is his tongue inside his mouth.

An abundance of images can be found in the poems of Huidobro, Reverdy and Dermée. However, some of these images are too logical to be classified as conforming to the second principle of the Nord-Sud

aesthetics. Most of the images used by Huidobro are not very different from those which can be found in traditional poetry. Those used by Jacob and Apollinaire, although much fewer in number, are much more colorful and aesthetically pleasing.

III

The third principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics is that a purely artistic emotion is produced by the poem, thus uniting the various elements of which it is composed. Vicente Huidobro used this technique in every poem published in Nord-Sud, even his very first, "L'homme triste":

Sur mon coeur il y a des voix qui pleurent
 Ne plus penser à rien!
 Le souvenir et la douleur se dressent
 Prends garde aux portes mal fermées.
 Les choses s'ennuient
 Dans la chambre
 Derrière la fenêtre où le jardin se meurt
 les feuilles pleurent
 Et dans le foyer tout s'écrase

Tout est noir
 Rien ne vit que dans les yeux du chat

Sur la route un homme s'en va
 L'Horizon parle
 dans le crépuscule il s'efface

La mère est morte sans rien dire
 Et dans ma gorge un souvenir
 Ta figure au feu s'illumine
 Quelque chose voudrait sortir

Quelqu'un tousse dans l'autre chambre
 Une vieille voix
 Comme c'est loin!
 Un peu de mort tremble dans tous les coins

(NS, 2, 9)

The pain experienced by the poet is projected in things: a garden, leaves, the interior of a room. These inanimate objects react as a

human being does when confronted by pain, sadness or anguish. They are united by this common emotion -- an emotion which is impossible to name precisely because it is a combination of things, creating a "situation" in the words of Jacob.¹⁵ The tension is increased by the verses: "Tout est noir / Rien ne vit que dans les yeux du chat". There is a progression from a feeling of sadness and solitude to a fear of death in the last two verses.

It is impossible to attribute this emotion simply to disconnected images. At times terse statements, interspersed with images, can produce the same effect, as in the poem "Quelque chose frôle...";

Quelque chose frôle le mur
On sent une âme qui veut naître
Aveugle
Quelqu'un cherche une porte
Demain les yeux seront ouverts
Un bruit
On ne trouve pas
Dans la vie

Il y a quelquefois un peu de soleil

Elle viendra
On l'attend.
(NS, 4-5, 20-21)

There are two parts to this poem. The first part, using the present tense, implies a struggle to gain an awareness of the mysteries of existence. In the second part, the future tense is used, thus promising the revelation of the secrets which have so preoccupied the poet. This poem is amazingly similar in style and in its use of symbols to many of Reverdy's poems. Huidobro limited himself to a few brief statements; he used symbols prevalent in the former poet's own poems ("le mur", "une âme", "une porte", "les yeux", "bruit" and

"soleil"). Whereas, in "L'Homme triste", Huidobro used verbs and nouns which convey emotion in themselves, in the poem "Quelque chose frôle...", he succeeded in using the most bare, least connotative words.

Reverdy created an atmosphere of fear and distrust in which he, the poet, is an exile, as in the poem "La Neige tombe...". The most ordinary events acquire an occult import, referring to invisible but potent forces as in the poem "La Lumière":

Midi
 La glace brille
 Le soleil à la main
 Une femme regarde
 Ses yeux
 Et son chagrin
 Le mur d'en face est dépôli
 Les rides que le vent fait aux rideaux du lit
 Ce qui tremble
 On peut regarder dans la chambre
 Et l'image s'évanouit
 Un nuage passe
 La pluie
 (NS, 11, 8)

The emotion is projected to a wall, the wind, the room, a cloud and the rain. The series of visual images reveal the contours of the skeletal interior of a room which has become a prison to the poet. The tension has progressed from noon and sunshine at the beginning to rain and bleakness at the end. This process was explained by Michel Manoll: "Reverdy est un voyant au sens où il peut dégager de l'object qui frappe son regard, ses traits spirituels, qui se traduiront plastiquement et qui, selon la vision recherchée, véhiculeront l'abstrait jusqu'au concret".¹⁶ The system is much better

is always intangible and indescribable, as I indicated in the analysis of the poem "De quelques invitations".¹⁷

In certain poems, Apollinaire succeeded in his own way in provoking an emotion as we saw in "Fusée-signal" and "Départ".¹⁸ Apollinaire rarely isolated substantives; he chose to isolate complete sentences and then let them interact to form the final emotion. In other poems, such as "La Victoire", he preferred to use direct statements (NS, 1, 8-10).

To varying degrees, the five poets succeeded in writing poems whose disconnected parts combined to create an emotion or an inner reality. They proceeded by making concrete an abstract concept or idea. Huidobro, especially in the first poems published in the review, seemed to distrust his ability to provoke an emotion merely by enumerating objects and images. He chose words which conveyed in themselves an état d'âme.

IV

The fifth principle, and one much overrated as characteristic of the Nord-Sud style,¹⁹ is that a new syntax be used, based on a typographical dispersion. It advocated treating the borders of the page like the edges of a canvas. The spaces or blancs were to have a double function: to substitute for punctuation; and to serve as the positive element of a visual construction.²⁰

The first to use this technique in Nord-Sud was Guillaume Apollinaire. In his poem "La Victoire", the important, brief passages are indented:

Mais entêtons-nous à parler
 Remuons la langue
 Lançons des postillons
 On veut de nouveaux sons
 de nouveaux sons
 de nouveaux sons
 (NS, 1, 8)

At other times, he isolated one word for poetic effect:

Devant l'ardente moquerie
 Ce rire se répand
 Partout
 (NS, 1, 9)

Centering the poem also makes it visually pleasing, as in parts of Jacob's prose poem "Histoire de don Juan":

la voisine avec des poils bruns sur la lèvre
 des oeils noirs
 des mouchoirs
 des poignards
 des placards.
 (NS, 1, 14)

It was only with the publication of "Derrière la gare" and "L'Ombre" that this technique was used with greater complexity. Pierre Reverdy's Nord-Sud poems do not have the same typographical arrangements as the same poems published in Sources du vent (1929). Like Apollinaire, Reverdy used dispersion to isolate and signal the importance of certain groups of words, as in the poem "De haut en bas":

L'orage est près
 Une branche s'incline sur l'oeil qui dort
 Un poisson mort
 L'eau s'étire Quelqu'un sort
 (NS, 6-7, 23)

The spaces left between the phrases emphasize the tension of the poem. His later poems "Espace", "Plus profond" and "Lumière" have an apocalyptic typography which indicates a natural registration of

thought. Even the form of the verse suggests a world decomposed and fragmented like his "figure décapitée" in the poem "L'Ombre" (NS, 4-5, 8). The dispersion is all the more appropriate since these poems reveal glimpses of a cosmos which the poet captured and spaced in all its irregularity. It is, according to Sarah Frances Jacob, "a fulguration of print, which acts like a graphic disclosure of swift, transcendent insights".²¹

Dermée's first poems using typographical dispersion resemble those of Apollinaire. "Nietzsche" is an example:

Tombe
 en
 silence
 Comme une orange
 (NS, 4-5, 13)

"Tombe / en / silence" is given a visual fall; and the verse "Comme une orange" flattens the fall as the orange becomes flat on impact. In the poem "Agrafes d'argent", Dermée used the simultaneist technique characteristic of the analytic phase of cubist painting in which the artist strove to depict an object from various angles. Similarly, Dermée used key words, printed in capital letters at the side, and representing the subject of the verses it encloses:

V
 A Je la piétine avec une ineffable rage I
C
 h Chant de triomphe T
O
 ! I
R
 L'holocauste monte en spirales. E
(NS, 6-7, 7)

In his later poems, Dermée began dispersing substantives which formed an image but which did not have any transition between the various parts, as in the poem "Rose éblouie":

Matin troublé
 regards muets
 lumière étrange

 Fleur qui s'entre'ouvre
 l'horizon
 Quel creux sonore
 bruit d'un grelot
 La ville blanche
 mon coeur
 gisent dans la vallée
 (NS, 10, 11)

The spaces, in effect, may be said to serve as the unexpressed link between the disconnected parts of the poem.

It was not until he wrote the poem "Tour Eiffel" that Huidobro used typographical dispersion in his Nord-Sud poems. He created, with the musical scale, a stairway to the top of the Eiffel Tower:

Mon petit garçon
 Pour monter à la Tour Eiffel
 On monte sur une chanson

Do
 ré
 mi
 fa
 sol
 la
 si
 do

Nous sommes en haut
 (NS, 6-7, 24-25)

To indicate punctuation, Huidobro usually went back to the left hand margin unless he wanted to draw the reader's attention to certain words, as in the poem "Ton cri perça...":

Ton cri perça le plafond
 Et la pluie sur ton visage
 Le délaye dans l'ombre
 Où vas-tu
 (NS, 9, 9)

Le chemin de la glace
 Est long à parcourir
 Et les cheminées font l'adieu des mouchoirs

Elle s'est noyée dans le miroir
 Les saules de la rive

méditent
 (NS, 9, 9)

The key to the poem lies in the indented "Où vas-tu" and "Elle s'est noyée dans le miroir", thus drawing the reader's attention to the anguish reflected in the landscape. There is a particular dramatic effect resulting from dropping "méditent" a line lower than "Les saules de la rive", especially since it comes at the end of the poem. A calm, introspective mood is established.

Except for the fact that Huidobro, Dermée and Reverdy went back to the left hand margin to indicate punctuation or a breathing pause, the fifth principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics was not observed as it had originally been intended. Several later poems by Reverdy are an exception such as "Lumière". It will be interesting to observe in Chapter IV of this thesis whether Huidobro's poems written in 1918 bear the mark of this principle more strongly than did the Nord-Sud poems.

It is obvious that not all five of the poets in question followed the Nord-Sud aesthetics in their poems. This statement applies especially to the two older poets, Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire. They continued to write poems conforming to their individual styles. Apollinaire's poems appear to be especially ill-suited to conform to the apollonian style advocated by the Nord-Sud aesthetics.

However, Reverdy, Huidobro and Dermée complied, in varying degrees, to its main principles. It is ironical to note that one of

the most valued characteristics in distinguishing the Nord-Sud style, the fifth principle, was only partially applied. Reverdy's poems in Nord-Sud do not really change, just as they had not changed very much from his previous poetry. Dermée, however, used a wide variety of styles. Huidobro's poems progressed from the semi-romantic poem, "L'Homme triste", to the creationist poem, "Ton cri perça...". However, as I observed above, Huidobro still sought to control too closely the reader's reaction and did not allow the various elements of the poem to act by themselves on his sensibility.

Bary observed that the poetry of Huidobro is distinguished from that of Reverdy by a lighter, more playful tone:

Se mueve en un mundo poético más inventado y menos apegado a la realidad cotidiana que el de Reverdy, gracias sobre todo a su don de la imagen atrevida. Las imágenes de Reverdy suelen ser tradicionales; su autor las usa de manera frugal. Huidobro las prodiga como el millonario que fue.²²

I must disagree with David Bary. Reverdy's images are much more effective than those of Huidobro. The latter poet was still content to use traditional metaphors, similes and personification. Guillermo de Torre shares a similar opinion as Bary's but he refrains from making a value judgement:

... resalta diáfamanamente la diferencia explícita que hiende el creacionismo peculiar a cada uno de estos poetas. Y de ahí las dos ramificaciones en que éste puede irradiar: el creacionismo estructural e imaginista de Huidobro y el conceptual de Reverdy. Pues mientras el primer poeta crea, adjetival y estructuralmente, todos y cada uno de los versos dentro del conjunto temático, Reverdy sólo sitúa la imagen al modo elíptico y dépouillé, sin alcanzar siempre el área creatriz....²³

There are few indications in the poems published in the review Nord-Sud that Huidobro's poetry was actually created in all its aspects.

More important is the fact that his brief contact with the four poets discussed here showed him how to apply some of the theories he had formulated several years previously. His later poems published in later issues of the review apply his own and the Nord-Sud theories more closely than the first poems did. He learned to combine a number of images in a poem with the object of provoking an emotion, an inner reality, or an état d'âme. In this respect, his poetry became, not one describing or suggesting experiences, but the experience itself. Because of its immediacy, the poet in a sense disappears from such poetry and becomes a mysterious "je" or "on" which can easily be transferred to the reader. Furthermore, Huidobro's poems became increasingly concise and structured. During his contact with the Nord-Sud group, Huidobro did not make maximum use of the image in his poems. In what way did he continue to change the theory he had learned to apply in his poems? The next chapter will study this question by examining five books of poems published by Huidobro in 1917 and 1918.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Many of the poems published in Nord-Sud by the five poets mentioned above appeared in later collections of poetry. Eleven of the twelve poems by Huidobro were included in Horizon carré after changes were made in typography. The other poem "Tour Eiffel", appeared separately after being extensively developed. All the poems contributed by Pierre Reverdy appeared many years later in Sources du vent (1929). Only changes in typography were made. Some of Jacob's poems appeared in Le Laboratoire central (1921); all the poems published by Apollinaire in the review were included later in Calligrammes (1918) and Il y a (1925).

² The fourth principle discussed in Chapter II lends itself with difficulty to a separate study of its application in poetry. I have incorporated the study of the application of this principle in the others, creating hopefully less duplication.

³ See Chapter II, p. 34 of this thesis.

⁴ De Baudelaire au surréalisme, édition nouvelle revue et remaniée (Paris: José Corti, 1966), p. 257.

⁵ R. L. Admussen, "Nord-Sud: 1917-1918", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1966, p. 28.

⁶ See this chapter, pp. 64-65.

⁷ "The man and the poet in the work of Pierre Reverdy", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Tulane University, 1956, p. 222.

⁸ Ibid., p. 227.

⁹ (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 23.

¹⁰ See this chapter, pp. 68-69.

¹¹ Ana María Nicholson, "Vicente Huidobro and Creationism", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1967, pp. 69-70.

¹² See this chapter, pp. 64-65.

- ¹³ See this chapter, p. 74.
- ¹⁴ Renaud, Lecture d'Apollinaire (Lausanne: Editions L'Age d'Homme, 1969), p. 474.
- ¹⁵ Max Jacob, Le Cornet à dés, p. 22.
- ¹⁶ Pierre Reverdy, (Paris: Seghers, 1951), p. 62.
- ¹⁷ See the poem reproduced in this chapter, p. 74.
- ¹⁸ See the poem reproduced in this chapter, pp. 75-76.
- ¹⁹ David Bary, Huidobro o la vocación poética (Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1963), p. 72.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ S. F. Jacob, p. 186.
- ²² Bary, p. 79.
- ²³ "La poesía creacionista y la pugna entre sus progenitores", Cosmópolis, V, 20 (1920), p. 601.

CHAPTER IV

HUIDOBRO'S POST NORD-SUD POEMS, 1917-1918, AND THE QUESTION OF THEIR ADHERENCE TO THE REVIEW'S AESTHETICS

As I demonstrated in Chapter III, the change apparent in some of Huidobro's Nord-Sud poems, especially those published near the end of his collaboration on the review, indicates that during his brief sojourn in France, Huidobro learned to apply the theories he had developed in Chile. This chapter will study the poems published by Huidobro during or immediately following his alliance with the Nord-Sud group to determine whether he continued to develop his conception of poetry or whether he changed his style. The poems which I will study in this chapter are Horizon carré (1917),¹ Tour Eiffel (1918),² Hallali: poème de guerre (1918), Ecuatorial (1918),³ and Poemas árticos (1918).⁴

I

Faithful to the epigraph of Horizon carré, "Rien d'anecdotique ni de descriptif. L'émotion doit naître de la seule vertu créatrice" (OC, I, 261), the poems of this period are characterized by a substitution of description and anecdote by a careful accumulation of images and terse statements consciously designed to create an emotion or an état d'âme. In the poem "Nouvelle chanson", the spiritual qualities of each separate image unite to create in the reader an impression of

confinement and even imprisonment:

En dedans de l'Horizon
QUELQU'UN CHANTAIT

Sa voix
N'est pas connue

D'OÙ VIENT-IL

Parmi les branches
On ne voit personne

La lune même était une oreille

Et on n'entende (sic)
aucun bruit

Cependant
une étoile déclouée
Est tombée dans l'étang

L'HORIZON
S'EST FERMÉ

Il n'y a pas de sortie
(OC, I, 261-262)

Consistent with the title of the collection, Horizon carré, the horizon represents, in this poem and in the title, a confining area whose limits are impossible for the poet to penetrate. The first line suggests that the horizon has boundaries ("En dedans de l'horizon"). The impression of absolute silence is created by the fact that even the moon becomes an ear ("La lune même était une oreille"). The use of various tenses only serves to accentuate the immediacy of the experience.

The poems of Horizon carré do not describe an experience, but are structured so that the reader can undergo the experiences as he is reading the poem. Fear and anxiety, due to mysterious causes, are provoked usually by presenting an anonymous being imprisoned within a

wall and reaching out for the cosmos, symbol of his poetic ideal, yet reluctant because he fears disappointment.

According to David Bary, in the poems Tour Eiffel, Hallali: poème de guerre and Ecuatorial, "Huidobro viola a sabiendas la prohibición que se había impuesto en la nota preliminar de su Horizon carré contra lo 'anecdótico y descriptivo'".⁵ He implies in his analysis that Huidobro was displaying latent romantic tendencies.⁶ The poem Tour Eiffel, a preliminary sketch of which was published in Nord-Sud, has a definite subject, as the title indicates. It is a simultaneist sketch of the Eiffel Tower. However, the charm and suggestive quality of Huidobro's terse cinematic metaphors have been converted, in the finished version, into over-explicitness, as the examples below demonstrate:

Tour Eiffel
Ruche des mots
Encrier de miel
(NS, 6-7, 24)

TOUR EIFFEL
Et c'est une ruche de mots
Ou un encrier de miel
(OC, I, 285)

In the first example, the reader must create his own transition within the context of the poem, whereas, in the second example, the relationship is already established.

The poems of Hallali also have a definite theme -- war, its horrors and its anticipated victory. However, the poem "Le Cimetière des soldats", illustrates that, despite the theme based on an event, Huidobro used the Nord-Sud technique to create this poem:

L'ombre qui tombe des arbres
S'est mouillée dans l'eau

On ne voit pas le vent

Mais la forêt métallique
Chante comme un orgue

La voilà

La France d'hier sous l'herbe
Plus belle qu'une femme nue

La terre encore tiède
Garde les derniers secrets

Où sont toutes les mains coupées

Une cloche sonne
Derrière les nuages

Tournée vers l'océan filial
Elle appelait quelqu'un

SILENCE

SILENCE
(OC, I, 289)

In this poem, an overwhelming sense of loss is experienced, not described. Its impact becomes almost unbearable when the reader is confronted with the two last words of the poem. The dispersion accentuates the horrifying, morbid silence which follows a war. Furthermore, the capitalized letters in these words suggest the silent scream of the soul of the onlooker caused by a careful and calculated progression of intense images: the shadow from the trees immersing itself in water conveys an unexplained sadness echoed by the funereal, organ-like moan of the wind; the evocation of a France buried and disabled suggests a void, a hopelessness created by war; the unheeded bell, ringing beyond the clouds, triggers the final, desperate realization of loss and solitude, even of alienation. In Hallali, Huidobro transferred his solitude and anguish to the picture

of a war-torn country, remaining constant to the first principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics, but no longer hesitant to base his poems on concrete objects or events around which he created an emotion. As in some of Max Jacob's works, the anecdote, although used in this poem, is not important for itself.

In Ecuatorial, Huidobro observed and commented on the actual world around him -- a world which he predicted was rushing to its destruction: "Era el tiempo en que se abrieron mis párpados sin alas / Y empecé a cantar sobre las lejanías desatadas" (OC, I, 293). However, his poem is not a description of this world hurtling through space to its destruction, but a suggestion, a vague feeling of foreboding is created, that this feared event will occur. Instead of creating an emotion in a poem, as he had done previously, Huidobro created several, which, when combined, strengthen the possibility of his prediction:

El niño sonrosado de las alas desnudas
Vendrá con el clarín entre los dedos
El clarín aún fresco que anuncia
El Fin del Universo
(OC, I, 302)

Some of his images suggest desolate visions of loss and exile:

Los ocasos heridos se desangran
Y en el puerto los días que se alejan
Llevaban una cruz en el sitio del ancla
(OC, I, 295)

Bajo el bosque afónico
Pasan lentamente
las ciudades cautivas
Cosidas una a una por hilos telefónicos
(OC, I, 295)

Llegamos al final de la refriega
Mi reloj perdió todas sus horas
(OC, I, 300)

As I observed in Chapter III, in his Nord-Sud poems, Huidobro was hesitant to rely on the effect of the whole poem and used words with emotional connotations rather than relying on concrete objects and situations as other poets were doing.

The poems of Poemas árticos generally provoke feelings of dread and hopelessness, implicit in the title and consistent with the bleak prediction of Ecuatorial. A series of disconnected images suggest an état d'âme, as in the poem "Camino":

Un cigarro en el vacío

A lo largo del camino
He deshojado mis dedos

Y jamás mirar atrás

Mi cabellera
Y el humo de esta pipa

Aquella luz me conducía
Todos los pájaros sin alas
En mis hombros cantaron

Pero mi corazón fatigado
Murió en el último nido

Llueve sobre el camino
Y voy buscando el sitio
donde mis lágrimas han caído
(OC, I, 306)

An acute sense of hopelessness and loss is provoked, but, contrary to the existential anguish of Reverdy's poems, Huidobro's anguish is a result of his inability to write ("A lo largo del camino / He deshojado mis dedos", "Todos los pájaros sin alas / En mis hombros cantaron"). There is, in this poem, a greater lack of transition between images, resulting in a greater dependence on the reader to make the necessary associations, as in the first line, and in this image: "Mi cabellera / Y el humo de esta pipa". Both images are conspicuous for their lack

of a predicate -- a grammatical element which is often easily implied. In a number of other poems, instead of an emotion being provoked, a whole new world is created, a world only conceived within the mind of the poet.

The first principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics was applied in the poems in that review as well as in the books of poems published immediately afterwards. However, there is a change or progression in the creation of these autonomous poems. This change was announced in Ecuatorial; at the end of the poem, the Universe is shattered. The poems of Poemas árticos truly attempt to create their own universe, independent of the traditional universe we know.

II

Images played an important part in the Nord-Sud aesthetics, but, in the poetry, they were to a great extent still bound to traditional reality. It is in the post Nord-Sud period that Huidobro's images may be said to have become truly autonomous. However, there is little indication of this tendency in the poems of Horizon carré, which resemble closely those of Nord-Sud. The predominant number of images disclose an unusual angle of vision, as in the following examples: "Le jour se casse contre les vitres" (OC, I, 263), "Les murs / Ont écouté de belles paroles" (OC, I, 269), "UN BRAS INCONNU / a levé le soleil / parmi la pluie" (OC, I, 271), "DERRIÈRE SA TÊTE / LE BORD DU MONDE" (OC, I, 273), "Les rayons de lumière / qui tombent / Ont criblé le sol" (OC, I, 280), and "Le bras d'eau cherche l'horizon / Au fond du paysage" (OC, I, 281). The list is endless. A logical explanation can be devised for each example, but this would be de-

feating Huidobro's purpose. For example, in the last image, a river is implicitly compared to an arm searching for the horizon, an image which is conceptually possible. However, Huidobro did not remain satisfied with the commonly used poetic technique of comparison and personification. In several of the examples listed above, we see that he brought together an abstraction ("jour", "paroles") and concrete objects which can be seen or touched ("vitres", "murs").

Many of the techniques used in the Nord-Sud poems to create images, are also found in Horizon carré. Huidobro gave life to inanimate objects and concepts by adding to them an adjective usually pertaining to humans, as in "La lanterne sourde" (OC, I, 272), or by attributing to them a verbal element designating human actions or states of being, as in "Et les angoisses / se sont évanouies" (OC, I, 263), "LA GLACE / s'ennuie d'attendre" (OC, I, 269). Huidobro also made dissimilar things share a common characteristic: "Le vol des oiseaux / et les cris des enfants / Sont de la même couleur" (OC, I, 263). Also, he juxtaposed two elements and eliminated the transition between them, as in "SUR LE SOMMET / UN AVEUGLE" (OC, I, 264), "Et dans la nuit / Violon de la lune / UNE VOIX", and "DEUX ENDROITS / DEUX OREILLES" (OC, I, 271). In the poem "Fleuve", he juxtaposed two complete images, linked only by the space between them:

Les saules	Des femmes
qui écoutent	Qui lavent
penchés	leurs chevelures
	(<u>OC</u> , I, 281)

The result is an implicit comparison. Huidobro also used, but quite sparingly, explicit comparisons: "Et les gens qui descendent / sur l'écran / Ont déposé leur chair / comme un vieux pardessus" (OC, I,

267), "Dans les gratte-ciels / Les ascenseurs montent comme des thermomètres" (OC, I, 279).

But, of greatest importance for the poetry of this period, Huidobro began to use creationist images. They cannot be explained logically and are a creation of the poet's imagination, as in the following examples: "Les paupières pleines de musique" (OC, I, 264), "Et des étoiles naufragées / Dormaient sur tes seins" (OC, I, 273), "L'ombre des chiens / Faisait craquer le sable" (OC, I, 276), "Le chien qui avait mordu son ombre / Saignait dans le ruisseau" (OC, I, 281), and "Le rosier qui pousse dans ma main / S'est effeuillé / Comme un vieux livre" (OC, I, 283). Although they are autonomous images in the sense that they are not a description or even a reflection of traditional reality and cannot be construed logically, they are an important part of the poem for the état d'âme they help to create by playing on the reader's sensibility.

In Hallali, although all the images used convey an emotion in relation to the war, or state an existing condition, Huidobro used numerous techniques to achieve this. He abandoned, to a great extent, the unusual point of view of ordinary things and situations, a technique predominant in Horizon carré. He used a few, whose strangeness is much more marked, as in "les tours sont des clairons pendus" (OC, I, 287), "Les trains s'en vont sur des cordes parallèles" (OC, I, 288), "Toutes les étoiles sont des trous d'obus" (OC, I, 289). In one specific image, "et mieux qu'un chien / Le canon surveille / Quelques fois / Il aboie / LA LUNE" (OC, I, 289), Huidobro transferred the characteristic of the dog to the cannon resulting in a very vivid image. He also used an increasing number of purely creationist

images: "La corne de la lune crie / Hallali / Hallali" (OC, I, 287), "La terre nue roule encore / Et même les pierres crient" (OC, I, 288), "On voit par terre sanglant / L'aviateur qui se cogna la tête contre une étoile éteinte" (OC, I, 289), and "Les matelots couleur de vieille pipe / Chanteront à genoux sur les vagues" (OC, I, 291). All parts of these images are a result of a restructuring of things and concepts in the poet's imagination. He did not copy from traditional reality.

However, it was not until Ecuatorial that Huidobro opted to use predominantly created images. Although they cannot be explained logically, they nevertheless are indispensable in creating an increasing aura of foreboding and menace. Technically, they are only connected by the omniscient eye of the poet. The poem depicts a spiritual adventure communicated to the reader through seemingly concrete images, as in the following: "Una sombra rodó sobre la falda de los montes / Donde el viejo organista hace cantar las selvas" (OC, I, 293), "Sobre el arco iris / un pájaro cantaba", "Las plumas de mi garganta / Se entibiaron al sol / que perdió un ala" (OC, I, 294), and "MAR DE HUMAREDAS VERDES" (OC, I, 296). Several creationist images convey a vague awareness of man's cruelty in exploiting others and his environment: "El capitán Cook / Caza auroras boreales / En el Polo Sur" (OC, I, 295), "Una manzana y una estrella / Picotean los búhos" (OC, I, 298), and "El negro esclavo / abre la boca prestamente / Para el amo pianista / Que hace cantar sus dientes" (OC, I, 299). Many other creationist images reveal a world turned upside down, a world in which unusual and otherworldly things happen,

as in "la luna nueva / con las jarcias rotas / Ancló en Marsella esta mañana" (OC, I, 297), "Marte / pasa a través de / Sagitario" (OC, I, 299), "Una tarde / al fondo de la vida / Pasaba un horizonte de camellos" (OC, I, 300), and "Un paquebot perdido costeaba / Las islas de oro de la Vía Láctea" (OC, I, 301).

Contrary to the poems of Nord-Sud and of Horizon carré in which the poet was imprisoned in a room, in Ecuatorial, Huidobro populated his poem with seas, planets, mountains and plains reminiscent of Adán and to be found later in Altazor. Several other things begin to recur: the nightingale, the road, the limitless horizon. They become even more frequent in Poemas árticos until they culminate in Altazor into a totally created universe which has established its own laws. Several poems in Las pagodas ocultas served as a preliminary exploration of the spiritual qualities of this cosmos.⁷

In Poemas árticos, Huidobro in fact created a new world, a new cosmos in which few laws of the traditional universe apply, as these images demonstrate: "Las estrellas del oasis / Nos darán miel de sus dátiles" (OC, I, 304), "El viento contorsiona las calles" (OC, I, 306), "La luna y el pañuelo / Se secaban al sol" (OC, I, 310), "Anoche / la luna enferma murió en el hospital" (OC, I, 320), and "El planeta vacío que dormía en la copa" (OC, I, 330). Birds are often placed in unreal situations: "Y en el humo de mi cigarro / Había un pájaro perdido" (OC, I, 311), "La golondrina indiferente / Duerme sobre una cuerda del violín" (OC, I, 323), and "En tus cabellos se ha dormido / Aquella alondra que voló cantando" (OC, I, 327). In several examples given above, the abstract and the con-

crete are united in a single image.

The close proximity and interaction of celestial and terrestrial forces at times produces admirable and surprising images as in these examples: "Cada vez que abro los labios / Inundo de nubes al vacío", "Miro la estrella que humea entre mis dedos" (OC, I, 305), "En cada charco / duermen estrellas sordas" (OC, I, 303). The poet becomes absorbed into and an integral part of this new universe which is now within his reach.

The creationist images found in Poemas árticos are much more adventurous and aesthetically pleasing than his Nord-Sud images were. There is also present a greater degree of symbolism with respect to the poet's ideal and his poetry. The majority of the images in Poemas árticos are truly creationist images reflecting another universe and thus independent of the existing world. However, the intensity of the emotions evoked within closed rooms seems to have been dispersed throughout the cosmos resulting in a less acute emotion; that is, one whose urgency is not felt so strongly. Nevertheless, the themes of anguish and despair, when the poet is faced with the inexorable passage of time or with a fleeting or blurred inspiration, are still present. Throughout these poems, the reader can sense a dissatisfaction by the poet with his present theory; his poems are becoming increasingly self-referential. We can see that Huidobro is seeking a more appropriate way in which to express his created cosmos.

III

According to the third principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics, the poem must provoke an emotion. Huidobro's aim in Horizon carré

This feeling of imprisonment, being unable to attain what is beyond -- the cosmos, the poetic ideal -- is also present in the title of the book. The verses of Altazor, "ah entonces / Más allá del último horizonte / Se verá lo que hay que ver" (OC, I, 402), and the "horizonte abierto" (OC, I, 307) of Poemas árticos announce the triumphant escape constantly sought in Horizon carré.

The effect produced by the poems Tour Eiffel, Hallali and Ecuatorial was discussed in the first section of this chapter. It was determined that although Huidobro used specific things and events in the poems, they were structured in such a way that they require the active participation of the reader, making the poem an experience, not a description.

In Poemas árticos, Huidobro created, as in the poem "Horas", a strange world or situation in which the reader inevitably becomes troubled by the inexorable passage of time. The separate elements of this poem evoke a still, almost static, landscape whose magic is ruptured by the three final verses: "De cuando en cuando / Las horas maduras / caen sobre la vida" (OC, I, 303). In the poem "Vermouth", Huidobro relived, through a series of disconnected images, his creative period in Paris. The poet is seen as a consumer of "vino ardiente" and of "estrellas fermentadas" (OC, I, 314). The stars in these poems have become symbolic of his ideal in poetry. He sees himself as a god, dispensing to his followers the truths of the universe and of poetry: "Yo os doy mi sangre en hostias líricas", "Todos los siglos cantan en mi garganta". Finally, in "Marino", he boasts of his powers of creation:

Hice correr ríos
que nunca han existido

De un grito elevé una montaña
Y en torno bailamos una nueva danza

Corté todas las rosas
De las nubes del este

Y enseñé a cantar un pájaro de nieve

Marchemos sobre los meses desatados

Soy el viejo marino
que cose los horizontes cortados
(OC, I, 319)

An increasing number of poems in Poemas árticos forsake a definite emotion and become self-referential. In certain poems, an existential anguish is evoked as in "Balandre", "Egloga" and "Camino".

IV

Some critics maintained that the most characteristic feature of the Nord-Sud style was the typographical dispersion. However, as I demonstrated in Chapter III, few poems published in that review observed to any great extent the principle formulated by Reverdy. Huidobro applied to a greater degree the fifth principle in his post Nord-Sud poems. The changes effectuated in this area are especially noticeable in poems which were published both in Nord-Sud and in Horizon carré. An example is the poem entitled "La Chambre déserte..." (NS, 3, 10) and the same poem entitled "Noir" in Horizon carré (OC, I, 265). In the former poem, when punctuation was required, Huidobro merely left out the punctuation and continued on the next line to indicate a pause. The result was a neat, centrally located mise-en-page. In "Noir", however, there is a purposive allocation of words

on the page for visual effect as well as for rhythm. It appears that Huidobro deliberately spaced certain phrases and sentences and not others, in order to control the reading speed and thus attract greater attention to certain phrases. This technique is used for example when referring to an excessive sense of solitude and isolation, as in the following example:

Et la lune regarde
 Parmi les branches
 (OC, I, 265)

The isolation of words and phrases in the last six lines is particularly effective in connoting acute and anguished solitude:

La nuit
 La chambre s'inonde

 UN CRI
 PLEIN D'ANGOISSE

 Personne
 ne m'a répondu
 (OC, I, 266)

By printing the words "UN CRI" and "PLEIN D'ANGOISSE" in capital letters, Huidobro can draw the reader's attention to very important words, and give a visual representation of a very intense feeling -- as if the intensity itself had magnified the letters.

Other poems use typographical techniques more akin to those of Apollinaire and of the futurists. The poems Tour Eiffel and "Tam" visually represent words forming a ladder, echoing the idea of ascent present in the words used. The poem "Paysage" calls to mind some of Apollinaire's Calligrammes. The dispersion creates a landscape containing a sun, a tree, a mountain, a river, freshly painted grass, and a sheep. Despite the conventional painting which would result

from such an accumulation, Huidobro imbued these ordinary objects with an aura of anxiety and strangeness.

Hallali is more successfully dispersed on the page. Huidobro created a balance which is pleasing to the eye. There are no binding rules. At times he went back to the left hand margin of the page to indicate a pause:

Tout d'un coup un oeil s'ouvre
La corne de la lune crie
(OC, I, 287)

or he merely dropped down one line:

Un jour
il s'était égaré dans la fumée des cigares
(OC, I, 288)

In Ecuatorial, Huidobro used less dispersion.

The typographical dispersion in Poemas árticos appears to be very calculated. As the poem "Horas" illustrates, Huidobro separated the images by spaces:

El villorrio
Un tren detenido sobre el llano

En cada charco
 duermen estrellas sordas
Y el agua tiembla
Cortinaje al viento

 La noche cuelga en la arboleda

En el campanario florecido

Una gotera viva
 desangra las estrellas

De cuando en cuando
Las horas maduras
 caen sobre la vida
 (OC, I, 303)

Most of the images or phrases are given a visual isolation. The

objects and events are enumerated and juxtaposed.

In some poems, Huidobro isolated important words from the rest by surrounding them with generous spaces:

Y tú

Hijo

hermoso como un dios desnudo
(OC, I, 313)

He also capitalized certain phrases to capture the reader's attention:

En tus cabellos se ha dormido
Aquella alondra que voló cantando

CUAL ERA MI CAMINO

Nunca podré encontrarlo
(OC, I, 327)

The words printed in capital letters in a poem usually express, the most strongly, the emotion provoked or the key idea contained in the poem. Of all the Nord-Sud principles, the fifth is probably the least complex and the most disappointing in its application. Those familiar with Mallarmé's poem, Un coup de dés, also feel that the dispersion used by Huidobro is superficial and inferior.

I maintain that the poems studied in this chapter demonstrate that Huidobro did not abandon the Nord-Sud style upon his departure for Madrid in 1918. The poems published immediately afterwards show, on the other hand, that he explored further their possibilities in an attempt to reach his ideal of poetry. It is primarily in the realm of the image that Huidobro truly perfected the theory of the Nord-Sud aesthetics. Reverdy's conception of the image juste, observed by Huidobro in his Nord-Sud poems and in many of those published in Horizon carré, hampered the creation of truly autonomous images.

Ecuatorial and Poemas árticos abound in logical, yet suggestive images. I maintain that the poem Ecuatorial was truly prophetic; it predicted the end of the universe, the old one in which Huidobro felt imprisoned, and implied the possibility of creating a new conceptualized universe whose laws he began to explore in Poemas árticos. That is, he truly freed himself from traditional reality and created his own poetic reality. Huidobro entered a new phase in his poetic evolution, the apex of which he reached in Altazor and, thus, went beyond the Nord-Sud style.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Some of the poems in this book appeared in Nord-Sud in French and in El espejo de agua in Spanish. It was illustrated by Juan Gris.

² This is an extended development of the poem which appeared in Nord-Sud. The published book was illustrated by Robert Delaunay and each page was of a different color.

³ This book was dedicated to Pablo Picasso (OC, I, 293).

⁴ Huidobro dedicated this book to Juan Gris and Jacques Lipchitz with this epigraph: "Recordando nuestras charlas vesperales en aquel rincón de Francia" (OC, I, 303).

⁵ Huidobro o la vocación poética (Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1963), p. 90.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 89-90.

⁷ See chapter I, p. 22.

CHAPTER V

ALTAZOR: BEYOND THE NORD-SUD STYLE

As we saw in Chapters III and IV, Huidobro's brief sojourn in France in 1917-1918 and his collaboration there on the review Nord-Sud was an important factor in the evolution of his poetry. Huidobro learned to apply his theory that the creationist poet, although obtaining his material from the objective world, must create autonomous images, concepts and situations by means of a reordering and transforming process. Did Huidobro continue to write poems in the Nord-Sud style after 1918? Had he finally perfected his theory of creationism and found his particular conception of poetry? In many poems of Poemas árticos, Huidobro expressed his frustration and despair due to his inability to reach his poetic ideal. In this chapter, I will study Huidobro's long poem Altazor (1931)¹ to see if Huidobro continued to write in the Nord-Sud style or if the discontent in Poemas árticos spurred him to continue his search for the ideal poetry.

The discontent expressed by Huidobro, most markedly in the first canto, is a result of a different conception of the role of poetry. In his article "Total" (1931), Huidobro complained of the fragmented view of the universe present in his previous poems:

Basta ya de vuestros pedazos de hombre, de vuestros pequeños trozos de vida. Basta ya de cortar el hombre y la tierra y el mar y el cielo.

Basta de vuestros fragmentos y de vuestras pequeñas voces sutiles que hablan por una parte de vuestro corazón y por un dedo precioso. (OC, I, 699)

He claimed that the ideal poem should embrace the entire universe:

No se puede fraccionar el hombre, porque hay todo el universo, las estrellas, las montañas, el mar, las selvas, el día y la noche....

La gran palabra que será el clamor del hombre en el infinito, que será el alarido de los continentes y los mares hacia el cielo embrujado y la tierra escamoteada, el canto del ser realizando su gran sueño, el canto de la nueva conciencia, el canto total del hombre total. (OC, I, 699-700)

As we saw in Chapter IV, in some 1918 poems, Huidobro attempted to give the poet a place in his newly created universe. The poem Altazor depicts Altazor, also Huidobro the poet, in search of this new universe and of a language capable of expressing it. This pilgrimage or spiritual adventure gives to the poem its unity and structure. It is presented on three planes:

- 1) the physical plane: Altazor traverses an imaginary space;
- 2) the spiritual plane: man, the poet, progresses from darkness and ignorance to light and understanding;
- 3) the level of language: there is a progression from a descriptive and emotional language in the first canto, through several stages in which language loses its referential connotations, to a new non-referential language created through pure sounds.²

The existential anguish of the first canto originates from Huidobro's awareness of the limitations of creationism as conceived thus far. Dussuel explained that existentialism and creationism are linked by "la angustia de vivir sin llegar al fin inalcanzable".³ In creationism, anguish results because true creation is impossible; it is "hermoso como concepción estética, pero 'monstruoso' para el hombre ya que escapa a sus limitadas posibilidades".⁴ Traditional language inevitably brings with it connotations incompatible with

the poet's intention.

Altazor, the lyric protagonist of the poem, is a complex figure: he is a bird on the physical level, a falling angel on the spiritual level and Huidobro the poet on the creative level. The poem begins with the expulsion of Altazor from paradise:

Altazor ¿por qué perdiste tu primera serenidad?
 ¿Qué ángel malo se paró en la puerta de tu sonrisa
 Con la espada en la mano?
 ¿Quién sembró la angustia en las llanuras de tus ojos
 como el adorno de un dios?
 ¿Por qué un día de repente sentiste el terror de ser?

 Se rompió el diamante de tus sueños en un mar de estupor
 Estás perdido Altazor
 Solo en medio del universo
 Solo como una nota que florece en las alturas del vacío
 No hay bien no hay mal ni verdad ni orden ni belleza

 ¿En dónde estás Altazor?
 (OC, I, 368-369)

Having renounced his previous poetic style, Altazor finds himself alone, falling in a void. He welcomes this physical fall because it will permit him to engage in an intense inward search:

Cae
 Cae eternamente
 Cae al fondo del infinito
 Cae al fondo del tiempo
 Cae al fondo de ti mismo
 (OC, I, 369)

Once he has reached the nadir towards which he has been falling, Altazor reflects on his solitude:

La distancia que va de cuerpo a cuerpo
 Es tan grande como la que hay de alma a alma
 Solo
 Solo
 Solo
 Estoy solo parado en la punta del año que agoniza
 (OC, I, 372)

In Altazor, Huidobro had almost completely abandoned the typographical

dispersion which was claimed to be so characteristic of the Nord-Sud style. He became more discriminating and used it only for calculated effect. In the example quoted above, the isolation of "solo" in three successive lines and its visual descendance accentuates the feeling of solitude experienced during the fall through space and within himself.

Through reflection he came to realize that his previous poetry was too restrictive and fragmentary (OC, I, 383). He maintained that his role as a poet should be to express the world in its entirety. In the first canto, Huidobro created a series of images to convey to us the idea that a new poetry was about to be born. Everything stops; everything is waiting:

El cerebro se torna sistro revelador
 Y la hora huye despavorida por los ojos
 Los pájaros grabados en el cenit no cantan
 El día se suicida arrojándose al mar
 Un barco vestido de luces se aleja tristemente
 Y al fondo de las olas un pez escucha el paso de los hombres

Silencio la tierra va a dar a luz un árbol
 (OC, I, 384)

He proposes to reject poetry which aims at creating beautiful images and which uses words to describe or suggest, in favor of poetry which will become "una música de espíritu" and capable of expressing eternity:

Quiero darte una música de espíritu
 Música mía de esta cítara plantada en mi cuerpo
 Música que hace pensar en el crecimiento de los árboles
 Y estalla en luminarias adentro del sueño
 Yo hablo en nombre de un astro por nadie conocido
 Hablo en una lengua mojada en mares no nacidos
 Con una voz llena de eclipses y distancias
 Solemne como un combate de estrellas o galeras lejanas
 Una voz que se desfonda en la noche de las rocas
 Una voz que da la vista a los ciegos atentos

Los ciegos escondidos al fondo de las casas
 Como al fondo de sí mismos
 (OC, I, 383)

Altazor has become a discoverer of the universe and of his intimate self. Now he must discover

la gran palabra que será el clamor del hombre en
 el infinito, que será el alarido de los continentes
 y los mares hacia el cielo embrujado y la tierra esca-
 moteada, el canto del ser realizando su gran sueño, el
 canto de la nueva conciencia, el canto total del
 hombre total". (OC, I, 699-700)

According to Huidobro, existing, traditional language is incapable of transmitting the total unity he wished to express: "Vuestra lengua es demasiado diminuta, demasiado pegada a vuestro yo mezquino y más refinada que vuestros confites. Habéis perdido el sentido de la unidad, habéis olvidado el verbo creador" (OC, I, 700). Like Rimbaud, he realized that he had to discover a new language to express his new vision of the universe.

At the end of the first canto, the parachute becomes a "para-subidas" by which Altazor converts his fall into an upwards flight of revelation and transcendence. Before he can attain the new language he is seeking, Altazor, but also Huidobro the poet, must first transcend the illusion of sensory reality which ties him to the earth. Huidobro renounced the important role he had previously assigned to the image. He realized that the image, the cornerstone of the creationist poem, was superfluous in his attempt to communicate to the reader his new visions:

Basta señora arpa de las bellas imágenes
 De los furtivos comos iluminados
 Otra cosa otra cosa buscamos
 Sabemos posar un beso como una mirada
 Plantar miradas como árboles

Enjaular árboles como pájaros
 Regar pájaros como heliotropos

 (OC, I, 391)

The poet is the "manicura de la lengua" and not "el mago que apaga y enciende" (OC, I, 391).

The solution offered in the third canto is to resuscitate language through play:

Hay que resucitar las lenguas
 Con sonoras risas
 Con vagones de carcajadas
 Con cortacircuitos en las frases
 Y cataclismo en la gramática
 (OC, I, 393)

Huidobro may have been thinking of the word games played by children, heavily dependent on alliteration, rhythm and nonsense words. A. M. Nicholson dismissed the critics who claimed that Huidobro's new conception of poetry in Altazor is indicative of his abandonment of poetry as a serious pursuit. She claimed that in the above-quoted verses, Huidobro "clearly implied play in its sacred aspect of Lila, that is to say, Pure Being manifesting itself and producing the world of creation out of a spirit of joyous play".⁵ The first step proposed by Huidobro was to completely relieve words of their referential connotations:

Mientras vivamos juguemos
 El simple sport de los vocablos
 De la pura palabra y nada más
 Sin imagen limpia de joyas
 (Las palabras tienen demasiada carga)
 Un ritual de vocablos sin sombra
 Juego de ángel allá en el infinito
 Palabra por palabra
 (OC, I, 393)

The second step was to forge new sounds:

Total desprendimiento al fin de voz de carne
Eco de luz que sangra aire sobre el aire

Después nada nada
Rumor aliento de frase sin palabra
(OC, I, 394)

Since words are slaves of reality for their representational value, the poet must divest words of all meaning, or he must break them up into pure sounds or fragments of words.

Although Altazor has conceived of this new language, he has not reached transcendence and cannot use it creatively. In the fourth canto, he continues his pilgrimage within himself. The eye, the symbol of inner contemplation, acquires cosmic attributes (OC, I, 395). Then the moment of revelation arrives:

Ya viene la golondrina monotémpora
Trae un acento antípoda de lejanías que se acercan
Viene gondoleando la golondrina
(OC, I, 398)

Although in the first few cantos Huidobro merely explained the ways in which he proposed to renew language, in the fourth canto he began to apply his theory. This moment of revelation is celebrated in a series of transmutations which sound like a children's rime:

Ya viene viene la golondrina
Ya viene viene la golonfina
Ya viene la golontrina
Ya viene la goloncima
Viene la golonchina
Viene la golonclima
Ya viene la golonrima
Ya viene la golonrisa
La golonniña
La golongira
La golonlira
La golonbrisa
La golonchilla
Ya viene la golondía
(OC, I, 398)

Huidobro used the constant, "golon-", and played with the phonetical variations on "-drina", choosing rhyming words such as "cima", "china", "clima", "rima", and "risa". He also played with the word "rosiñol", using the musical scale:

Pero el cielo prefiere el rodoñol
 Su niño querido el rorreñol
 Su flor de alegría el romiñol
 Su piel de lágrima el rofañol
 Su garganta nocturna el rosolñol
 El rolañol
 El rosiñol
 (OC, I, 399)

The bird plays an increasingly important part in the new language being created. The bird is the symbol of the bearer of revelation. His ability to fly to great heights represents the poet's spirit which has established a link with the infinite.

By the end of the fourth canto, Altazor has had a glimpse "más allá del último horizonte" (OC, I, 402). He expresses his exhilaration, at first in semi-recognizable language, then in pure sounds:

El pájaro tralalí canta en las ramas de mi cerebro
 Porque encontró la clave del eterfinifrete
 Rotundo como el unipacio y el espaverso
 Uiu uiui
 Tralalí tralalá
 Aia ai ai aaia i i
 (OC, I, 402)

The word "eterfinifrete" is an example of Huidobro's ability to create new words: "eter-" may represent eternity, the sky, and the earth; "-fini", the infinite; and "-frete", sound or vibrations. The poet has now grasped the secret unity of the universe -- the earth, the sky, man, the infinite -- and he has the power to express them in extra-terrestrial terms. Since the bird is the intermediary between man and the infinite, Huidobro chose his pure sounds from the song of the three

birds which have thus far appeared in the poem: the swallow (uiu), the nightingale (tralalí), and the falcon (aia).

However, as Nicholson expressed so succinctly, the poet's pilgrimage must continue: "... having arrived at the furthest point of involution of the Self, where there is only being, the poet, in a spirit of play and exploration, reverses and follows the transformation of being into becoming".⁶ The two most important elements of this canto are unity and multiplicity. The windmill becomes in the poem a powerful symbol of eternity; it has a still center and continuously revolving arms, symbolizing eternal becoming. Huidobro also gave form to this idea:

Molino de viento
Molino de aliento
Molino de cuento
Molino de intento
Molino de aumento
Molino de ungüento
Molino de sustento
· · · · ·
(OC, I, 408)

The process of becoming, characterized by the windmill, is created by the repetition of the word "molino", to which are assigned over two hundred different attributes or characteristics. The metamorphosis results from the incantatory rhythm. The words magically lose all fixed meaning; the "noumenon becomes phenomenon".⁷

The metamorphosis of things in nature, guided by sound alone, occurs in man as well. The poet can be a tree, a glow-worm and a rose-bush simultaneously and retain the characteristics of each. Furthermore, he can speak in their language:

Ahora soy rosal y hablo con lenguaje de rosal
Y digo
Sal rosa rorosalía

Sal rosa al día
 Salía al sol rosa sario
 Fueguisa mía sonrodería rososoro oro
 (OC, I, 415)

Alfonso Reyes called this technique "jitanjáfora" which designates words "sin significación, pero llenos de todo lo que no es sustancia, ...palabras que hablan a la sensación, a la fantasía".⁸

Although few of the words contained in the example above can be found in a dictionary, the created words originate from variations on and combinations of "rosal" and "salía". Their strange familiarity and the musical effect they produce are intended to play on the reader's sensibility.

Max Jacob used a similar technique in many of his poems, but he always used existing words. His verse, "le violeur est au violon: la violée vole!",⁹ from the poem "Le Rire impitoyable du serpent boa", finds its echo in these verses from Altazor: "Bajo la arcada eterna el arquero del arcano con su violín violeta con su violín violáceo con su violín violado" (OC, I, 417). Like Max Jacob in the example above, Huidobro played with traditional words which resemble each other phonetically but which are not related in meaning. Whereas Max Jacob used these associations to emphasize the absurdity of the world, Huidobro used them for aesthetic effect.

With the sixth canto, there is an emphasis on a terse disconnected style, requiring the reader, as often with the Nord-Sud poems, to participate more actively. In the previous cantos, the style was discursive and descriptive, freely alluding to sentiments; it was a pre-creationist style. Although created images abound in Altazor, they are not used in creating artistic emotions; they have a clearly

illustrative function. In the sixth canto, the style is more condensed, free of grammatical structures and often obscure. There are no images, nouns are numerous, and ambiguity is encouraged by the lack of punctuation, as in this example:

Al gloria trino
 apoteosis
 Va viajando Nudo Noche
 Me daría
 cristaleras
 tanto azar
 y noche y noche
 (OC, I, 419)

Since he knows all the secrets of the universe, Altazor can begin to divulge them in his new language. In the seventh canto, referential language disappears completely.

There are three basic techniques used in forming this new language:

1) pure sounds:

Ai aia aia
 ia ia ia aia ui
 Tralalí
 Lali lalá
 Aruaru
 urulario
 (OC, I, 422)

These sounds correspond to the sounds made by the birds in the poem.

2) the combination of sounds to make new words:

Olamina olasica lalilá
 Isonauta
 Olandera uruaro
 (OC, I, 422)

3) soldering words to form neologisms:

Lunatando
 Sensorida e infimento
 Ululayo ululamento
 Plegasuena

Cantatorio ululaciente
(OC, I, 423)

He forms a participle with the word "luna". "Mooning" ("lunatando") is not part of the Spanish language. In "infimento", he has combined "infinito" and "firmamento" as he had done with other words in the fifth canto: "El horimento bajo el firmazonte" (OC, I, 414). What was Huidobro's intention in creating this new language? If there are no identifiable words, how can the poet hope to communicate with the reader? Since, according to Huidobro, words contain connotations which he did not want to enter into the poem, he proposed to communicate by acting exclusively on the reader's sensibility.

The entire poem Altazor is a pilgrimage in search of this language, devoid of meaning, which can bypass the conscious mind. As Altazor's spiritual journey demonstrated, it was necessary for his soul to become purified from its material fetters before he could successfully dissociate language from its referential properties. Not only was the poem describing the occurrence of such a dissociation, both spiritually and linguistically, but it was undergoing it as well. The impure use of language in the first canto corresponds to the ignorance of Altazor. Huidobro did not even use the bare, controlled style of his Nord-Sud period, but went back to the descriptive and discursive language of his early poems, rampant with rhetorical devices. As the poem progresses, as the soul becomes disengaged from material things, the language itself becomes increasingly disengaged from all connotations. In the fourth and fifth cantos, words begin to lose fixed meanings. In the sixth canto, they are freed from sentence structure and, in the seventh canto, the words themselves

disappear in favor of pure sounds.

It would be unfair to Huidobro to classify this phase in his poetry with surrealism. As during the Nord-Sud period, Huidobro still believed that the poet must constantly be in a state of superconsciousness and superawareness. A. M. Nicholson conceived of it in terms akin to the aims and theories of the cubist painters:

He has followed the logic of self-referential art to its final conclusion, the creation of a new poetic language that affects the reader's sensibilities directly without having to dilute its impact in units that refer to images and concepts that lie outside the poem. In doing so he finally has freed poetry from its fetters of meaning, making it a direct confrontation between the poem and the reader.¹⁰

The reader will react solely to the rate of vibration of the sounds and rhythm produced without using language as an intermediary. It was Huidobro's intention to eliminate the reader's dependence on conditioning and tradition. He proposed to communicate to the reader by osmosis whereby the reader would be in a passive state, instead of actively participating as he had to do in the Nord-Sud poems.

Huidobro still required the poet to create, but a new language not a new world. Instead of being a fountain of beautiful images, the poet creates a totally conceptualized universe. Conceiving of the poet as a seer was not new in poetry. Huidobro was merely following the example of two French poets whom he greatly admired -- Mallarmé and Rimbaud. Rimbaud's "voleur de feu" is similar to Huidobro's *Altazor*; he too feels the need to create a new language to transmit his visions.¹¹ The search for a suggestive language is notably present in Mallarmé's poetry. Ordinary poetic language could not be used to express such intangible, transcendental subjects as Beauty, the Ideal, the Absolute. A new language had to be wrought from the old. To

convert poetry into a suggestive magic, Mallarmé maintained that words should not be used for their referential function but for their sound and their suggestive qualities: individual words would become insignificant outside the whole; word association would not be controlled by logic. Mallarmé aspired to make the poem as suggestive as music. He did not use words for their descriptive value but for their spiritual resonances. Huidobro, however, was not satisfied to work within the language.

The Dada poets also attempted to produce a poetry based on sounds and totally devoid of meaning. Hugo Ball explained the "sound poems" of the dadaists:

I invented a new species of words, "verse without words", or sound poems, in which the balancing to the vowels is gauged and distributed only to the value of the initial line....

With these sound poems we should renounce the language devastated and made impossible by journalism.

We should withdraw into the innermost alchemy of the word, and even surrender the word, in this way conserving for poetry its most sacred domain. We should stop making poems second-hand; we should no longer be content to achieve poetic effects with means which, in the final analysis, are but the echoes of inspiration, or simply surreptitiously proferred arrangements of an opulence in cerebral and imaginistic values.¹³

Behind their flippancy, the dadaists hid a deep concern for liberating the language of poetry from tradition. Since language is part of tradition, they maintained that language itself must be destroyed and started anew from sounds and music. But, the drastic action taken by the dadaists, and the attempt by Huidobro to find a new, more effective means of expression, are a basic concern of all poets. Huidobro was following a tradition which did not begin with the symbolists but with the beginnings of poetry itself. All poets, in a sense,

are engaged in creating their own poetic language.

In what ways does the poem Altazor go beyond the Nord-Sud style? The first principle, the rejection of the anecdotal and descriptive in favor of the autonomous poem, is implicit in the language developed in the seventh canto. It is the poet's mission to make his reader see or feel the infinite which he expresses. Describing it would require him to break up into fragments his vision of the total world and of the total man which he so arduously and persistently worked to attain.

The second principle, however, has been rendered obsolete. The poet can no longer create an autonomous work of art with images made up of disparate elements. In Altazor, Huidobro rejected his poetry constructed mainly of images because these must constantly refer to objects in exterior reality and because they present only a partial view of the world.

The provocation of an artistic emotion in the reader, given as the third principle, remains relevant in Altazor only if reworded: the poem is the direct communication of the secrets of the poet's conceptualized universe by a self-referential language which plays on the reader's sensibilities. Instead of an emotion being created in the reader by a careful arrangement of words and images, an experience, a vision is communicated to him directly through sounds and rhythm.

The fourth principle, the return to a "classic" style, is important in Altazor. Reverdy maintained that a classic style resulted when the poet had absolute control over himself and his means of expression. Before he can create a new language, the poet, according to Huidobro, must enter into a state of superconsciousness which will

enable him to conceive of the universe in its unity and multiplicity; he has complete control over the language since he is the creator of that language. The poet no longer has to submit to or constantly struggle against the multiple layers of connotations encrusted on traditional words. Despite the absolute control which Huidobro claimed he had over the poem, the end result is very similar to surrealism.

Finally, the most ephemeral principle of the Nord-Sud style, typographical dispersion to replace syntax and punctuation, has been nullified by the disappearance of traditional language. The dispersion used in many Nord-Sud poems created the rhythm. In Altazor, the rhythm is created by the repetition of pure sounds.

The change in poetic goal in Altazor automatically required a modification of Huidobro's previous style. The Nord-Sud style was too restrictive and too chained to traditional language to be used successfully to express the total view of the universe which Huidobro wished to communicate. His new poetic universe called for a language of the mind to recreate the world of phenomena in its totality. However, he had to experience the dissatisfaction with his previous style before he could develop his new poetry.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Cedomil Goic explained that the poem was written many years before it was published in its finished form: "El poema Altazor, que llevaba en la primera edición española el subtítulo de El viaje en paracaídas, poema en VII cantos, fué concebido por Huidobro en 1919 y a partir de esa fecha apareció fragmentariamente en diversas revistas y periódicos del viejo y del nuevo mundo, hasta que se le recogió definitivamente en libro en 1931, en Madrid". "La poesía de Vicente Huidobro: tercera parte, la obra", Anales de la Universidad de Chile, CXIV, 101 (1956), p. 84.

² Ana María Nicholson, "Vicente Huidobro and Creationism", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1967, p. 93.

³ Francisco Dussuel, "El creacionismo y la inquietud de lo infinito", Atenea, CXXX, 379 (1958), p. 111.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Nicholson, p. 107.

⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

⁷ Ibid., p. 114.

⁸ La experiencia literaria (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1942), p. 193. Quoted in Cedomil Goic, "La poesía de Vicente Huidobro: tercera parte, la obra", Anales de la Universidad de Chile, CXIV, 101 (1956), p. 96.

⁹ Le Cornet à dés (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 130.

¹⁰ Nicholson, pp. 120-121.

¹¹ Oeuvres (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 347.

¹² The Dada poets and painters: an anthology, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York: George Wittenborn, Inc., 1951), pp. xix-xx.

CONCLUSION

The works of Vicente Huidobro, published over a period of twenty years, disclose a deep concern and an incessant search for a poetic renewal. He awakened to the possibilities of poetry at a time when, not only in Chile but throughout Europe, daring experiments were being made in poetry. We have seen that the individual elements of his theory of creationism were not new as some critics have claimed. They either had a place in poetry traditionally or had been coming to the forefront since Baudelaire and the symbolists. The injection of vitality given to Spanish poetry by Rubén Darío and the Modernists made some of these elements accessible to many Spanish-American poets.

Before leaving Chile in 1916, Huidobro had developed, in theory, several of the principles which became incorporated into the aesthetics of the review Nord-Sud. However, his poetry remained tied to tradition. The poems which he published in the review gradually began to apply most of these principles so that by the end of 1917 Huidobro was writing poetry according to the theory he had developed in Chile. I maintain that, in view of the types of poems published, even before 1917, by the four major contributors, Apollinaire, Dermée, Jacob and Reverdy, Huidobro's style changed due to his contact with them. It is impossible and for the appreciation of Huidobro's poetry, unnecessary, to single out specific influences by certain members of the group on Huidobro. Our study indicates, however, that his poetry benefitted from this encounter on both an aesthetic

and a poetic plane. His collaboration on the review not only appears to have confirmed his poetic tendencies, but permitted him to develop them further. After the Nord-Sud period, he continued to search for the ideal expression in poetry. This led him to expand the horizons of his poetic world in Poemas árticos and Altazor.

The first principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics, that the poet should create an autonomous work of art, devoid of description and anecdote, was an important aspect of the poetry of Gautier and the Parnassians. Even though Huidobro declared himself opposed to rhetorical verse, his early poems abound in clichés and verbiage. It was not until the publication of the poems in Nord-Sud that he adopted a concise, extremely economical verse in the manner of Reverdy. The type of language he chose was linked to his view of reality and its place in the poem. Huidobro shared the viewpoint of many of his contemporaries that poetry should not be a second-hand and consequently ineffectual copy of objective reality, but a transformation of this reality into new poetic objects. In his works written prior to 1916, Huidobro attempted to create autonomous poems but he did not succeed. It was not until he learned to subject all parts of the poem to the effect produced by the whole that he achieved his goal. Most of the poems in Nord-Sud conform in part to this principle, but it was not until the publication of Horizon carré that he succeeded in creating truly autonomous poems. Then, as announced in Ecuatorial, Huidobro decided to expand his horizons and attempted to convey to the reader of Poemas árticos, his totally conceptualized universe of which man was to form an integral part. However, the dissatisfaction imparted in these poems incited Huidobro to search again for the ideal poetry.

He assigned to Altazor, the ideal poet, the task of finding the solution to his dissatisfaction. In his attempt to create a new universe, Huidobro found that the connotations inherent in the words used automatically carried over into his created universe. The solution proposed in Altazor was to abolish the word and consequently all meaning which accompanied it. Once language was eliminated, Huidobro devised a system of sound based on the song of the nightingale, the falcon and the swallow, the figurative mediators between the earth and the infinite. This new sound language, without tradition to control its reference, was to communicate directly to the reader, not on an intellectual, conceptualizing level, but on a passive, semi-conscious level. In his attempt to dissociate poetry completely from objective reality, Huidobro also developed the first principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics to its extreme limits.

The second principle advocated using the image consisting of the juxtaposition of disparate elements. Huidobro's first poems abound with figures of speech such as similes, metaphors and personification, instead of creationist images. Furthermore, they often conveyed, in themselves rather than in the poem as a whole, the intended emotion. This was remedied in the images of Ecuatorial and Poemas árticos. Huidobro no longer attempted to restrict himself to Reverdy's conception of the image juste; as a result, his images became more adventurous and colorful. They no longer carried an emotion but were now an integral and carefully planned part of an interdependent whole. In his later poems, the structure of the images also attests to his developed conception of the role of poetry. In his attempt to represent the universe in its totality and to give man

his rightful place in it, Huidobro juxtaposed celestial and terrestrial forces. The incongruity produced images of surreal quality. During this period in his poetic career, Huidobro wrote some poems which certain critics labelled surrealist. However, Huidobro's theoretical essays explain the difference between the works of this period and those of the surrealists: Huidobro wished at all times to keep himself and his poem under control. The surrealists, in theory, did not stress control by the poet as evidenced by their fondness for automatic writing, a practice which Huidobro strongly opposed. But when his poems are read, when they are acting on the sensibility of the reader, Huidobro, like the surrealists, no longer has absolute control.

According to the third principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics, the poem must provoke an emotion in the reader. Traditionally, the poem was designed to evoke an emotion. Then, in the twentieth century, a number of poetic movements emerged which maintained that the emotion must not be evoked but provoked. They wished, as did Huidobro, to make the poem a genuine experience for the reader, not merely a passive activity. The poems of Nord-Sud and Horizon carré did not fully succeed in achieving this. Since Huidobro injected emotion in his images, he destroyed the total aesthetic effect potential to the poem. At the same time as he broadened the horizons of his poetic world, he designed his poems to provoke an experience in the reader, an immersion into a totally conceptualized universe. He reached the apex of this practice with Altazor in which, in the seventh canto, the reader is confronted directly with the experience without language as an intermediary. The experience is not communicated on an

intellectual level but on the level of the senses and provoked by alliteration and rhythm.

The fourth principle, that there was to be a return to a classic style, was not demonstrated separately in the poems since it forms part of the intention of the poet and is not an overt presence in the poems. This element formed an important part of Huidobro's first essays and poems.

The fifth principle of the Nord-Sud aesthetics was the most ephemeral and the most superficial in its application. It advocated the creation of a new syntax based on typographical dispersion. Mallarmé had, many years before, experimented with dispersion, hoping to create a poem whose effect on the reader would be the same as music and in which words would lose their referential connotations. But, at no time did Huidobro's poems reach this degree of sophistication in the use of dispersion. The poems published in Nord-Sud and immediately afterwards used typographical dispersion for various reasons; for visual effect, to create the rhythm, to indicate punctuation, and at times to create ambiguity. In the seventh canto of Altazor, the rhythm is not created by typographical dispersion but by the repetition of pure sounds.

Huidobro combined these five principles into a fully integrated system which he had been developing since the beginning of his poetic career. The ideal poet in Altazor is Huidobro himself; his life was a pilgrimage in search of the true expression of poetry. However, the pilgrim could have failed to reach his destination had his road not led to France, and to cosmopolitan Paris and the Nord-Sud group. There Huidobro received the impetus and direction he needed

to continue his incessant quest.

The question of originality and of influences in Huidobro's works has been stressed by critics at the expense of his poems, a situation which is unfortunate since the tumultuous state of poetry at that time makes it impossible to dissociate influences effectively. A specific study of influences would have distorted the vitality of these times, the enthusiasm and changes created by an entire generation. Possibly one of the important factors for Huidobro's poetry was the atmosphere in which he made the transformation from a Modernist poet to a creationist poet. Once he had conquered that obstacle, he could continue to develop his poetry, broadening its scope, increasing its effectiveness on the level of sensibility. Huidobro's literary career between 1911 and 1931 follows a pattern: in Chile he developed his ideas about what poetry should be; then in Europe, he developed the techniques to convey it. Having discovered and become disillusioned with the limited horizons of his poetry, he proceeded to expand them. This involved a redevelopment of his conception of poetry. Finally, in Altazor he developed a language of the mind to communicate his conceptualized universe. This development in his poetry, was given its impetus in France by the Nord-Sud group. Huidobro, seen in this light, does not appear as a slave of novelty, but as a true poet seeking only to attain his individual conception of poetry and the ideal way of expressing it.

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